DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 453 018 RC 022 965

TITLE	Growing Partnerships for Rural Special Education. Conference Proceedings (San Diego, California, March 29-31, 2001).
INSTITUTION	American Council on Rural Special Education.
PUB DATE	2001-03-00
NOTE	307p.; For selected individual papers, see RC 022 966-987.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC13 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Distance Education; Educational Cooperation; Educational Practices; Educational Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; Gifted; Higher Education; Mainstreaming; Minority Groups; Partnerships in Education; Professional Development; Regular and Special Education Relationship; *Rural Education; Rural Schools; *Special Education; Special Education Teachers; *Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

The 2001 conference proceedings of the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) contains 62 papers and summaries of presentations concerned with issues in rural special education. The papers are presented in 12 categories: impacting governmental policy, at risk, collaborative education models, early childhood, gifted, multicultural, parents and families, preservice and inservice teacher education, technology, transition, and other. Topics include personnel preparation and service delivery issues in rural areas, school-level implementation of inclusion policies, addressing challenging behaviors, collaborative partnerships within and among schools, inclusive practices in schools and classrooms, rural gifted education, culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education, special education practices and programs on the Navajo Reservation, rural teacher practicums, professional development, distance learning, university-school partnerships, Web-based teacher training, transition of special needs students to the community, crisis response in rural schools, rural support groups, and training in low incidence disabilities. (SV)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 453 018

American Council on Rural Special Education

2001 Conference Proceedings

Growing Partnerships for Rural Special Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Judy Weyrauch

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

March 29-31, 2001
San Diego, California

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RC022965

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Impacting Governmental Policy

One-Room Schools In Montana At The Turn Of The Century: 1999-2001
Mary Susan E. Fishbaugh, Montana State University—Billings 4

Personnel Preparation And Service Delivery Issues In Rural Areas: The State Of The Art
Suzanne M. Martin, University of Central Florida; Jane M. Williams and Robert K. Hess, Arizona State University West 6

Reform Theory Into Practice: A Case Study Examination Of West Virginia's Efforts To Promote Inclusive Schooling Through Site-Based Partnership Decision-Making Practices
Holly Pae, University of South Carolina Spartanburg 13

At Risk

Contemporary Issues Education: Rural Perspectives And Resources
Suzanne Lamorey and Nancy Perry, Arizona State University 24

Insights Into Challenging Behavior: Positive Supports A Multi-Dimensional Approach
Pamela S. Flood and Betsy Enright, Center for Community Inclusion 30

Teacher-To-Teacher Share Square: Putting The Quilt Together-Reflections Of First Year Teachers
Ryan Hungerford and Geneal Cantrell, Furman University; Megan Keyes, Colin Rork, and Michelle Vogel, Hunt Meadows Elementary School 33

Treating Violence Early: Do You Know A Child Like Raymond?
Karen J. Carney, Arizona State University 39

When Downtown Problems Come Down Home: Partnering To Help Rural At-Risk Students
Sharon Neyme, Utah SIGNAL Project; Ronda Menlove, Utah State University 40

Collaborative Education Models

College Debate Opportunities For Students With Disabilities
Robert Steinmiller and Georgine Steinmiller, Henderson State University 46

Community Building, The Inclusion Classroom And Advisor, Advisee Time
Dorothy Jean Yocom and H. Timothy Blum, University of Wyoming 49

Early Childhood Intervention Partnerships On The Navajo Reservation With An Emphasis On Special Education
Karen Sealander, Catherine Medina, Armanda Gamble, Bobbie Pettigrew, Maria Snyder, Sherri White, Mary Helen Begay, Brian Bradley, Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson, Connie Heimbecker, Nellie McCarty, Bernita Nelson, Jacob Nelson, Jody Smith, Marsha Whitehair, Denise Redsteer, and Greg Prater, Northern Arizona University 53

The Effects Of A Discriminative Stimulus, Paired With Individual And Group Reward Contingencies, On The Decibel Levels In An Elementary School Lunch Room
Bryan Davey, Melina Alexander, Claudia Edmonson, Donald Stenhoff, and Richard West, Utah State University 58

Ending The Year In The Inclusion Classroom: Seeking Consistency While Promoting Transition And Change
Dorothy Jean Yocom and H. Timothy Blum, University of Wyoming 63

G'day Mate Or The Global Special Educator
Guy H. Gilberts, Chadron State College 67

Inclusion In Rural Schools: The Keys To Success
Georgine Steinmiller and Robert Steinmiller, Henderson State University; Terry Wallis, Vanderbilt University 72

Integrated Teacher Preparation Programs: The Participants Respond
James Burton and Gretchen Butera, West Virginia University 76

Literature Circles In The Inclusion Classroom: Addressing Individual Student Needs And The Standards Movement
H. Timothy Blum, Laura R. Lipsett, and Dorothy Jean Yocom, University of Wyoming 80

Project Prepare: Preparing Teachers To Meet The Needs Of Students With Disabilities In Rural Louisiana
Suzanne M. Martin, University of Central Florida; Carol Torrey and Sarah Al-Juraid, Southeastern Louisiana University 85

Responsive Special Education Partnerships: Dealing With The Tough Cases In Small Rural Schools
Nancy Harriman, Denmark Elementary School 91

Rural Special Education Teachers As Caregivers: Voices Of Students And Teachers
Gaye Luna and Catherine Medina, Arizona State University 96

Early Childhood

The Big Merge ...Early Childhood Education And Special Education
Noranne Yeager and Kim Madsen, Chadron State College 104

Gifted

Gifted Education In Rural Schools: A National Assessment (1999)
Clar Baldus, The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development 110

How To Compact The Curriculum When Students Know The Skills
Joan Lewis, University of Nebraska at Kearney 113

Language Isn't Needed: Nonverbal Assessments And Gifted Learners
Joan D. Lewis, University of Nebraska at Kearney 118

Multicultural

Creating Rural Culturallly Dynamic Classrooms: Culturally Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Strategies And Curriculum Materials
Patricia Peterson, Karen Sealander, Mina Burris, and Lena Gaddis, Northern Arizona University; Elizabeth Garza, Julie Ledezma, and Guadalupe Ullery, Somerton School District 124

Preparing Rural Inclusive Multicultural Educators To Teach Mexican-American And Native American Exceptional Students
Lena R. Gaddis, Patricia Peterson, and Karen Sealander, Northern Arizona University; Jeanette Honanie, Cynthia Robbins, Tonya Tso, and Helen Stalnaker, Tuba City Public Schools 130

Rural Navajo Students In Kayenta Unified School District's Special Education Programs: The Effects Of Home Location And Language
Connie Heimbecker, Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson, Bernita Nelson, Jody Smith, Marsha Whitehair, Mary H. Begay, Brian Bradley, Armanda Gamble, Nellie McCarty, Catherine Medina, Jacob Nelson, Bobbie Pettigrew, Karen Sealander, Maria Snyder, Sherri White, Denise Redsteer, and Greg Prater, Northern Arizona University 134

Who Me?: The Dilemma Of Rural Special Education In The English Language Learner World
Marilyn Gilberts, Nebraska District #30 141

Parents and Families

Lessons Learned: Effective Strategies For Partnering With Rural African-American Parents
Shelia Y. Smalley and Maria E. Reyes-Blanes, University of Central Florida 150

Parent Partnerships: Tips For Teachers
Kevin J. Miller and Wilfred D. Wienke, University of Central Florida 156

Preservice/Inservice

"But I Have A Right To Become A Teacher!"
June Canty Lemke, Gonzaga University; Suzanne Harrison, Evergreen Elementary School 160

A Capstone Practicum Course Through Distance Learning
Melanie Jephson and Rebecca Dillon, Stephen F. Austin State University 165

The Coach-Of-Coaches Model For Preparing Rural Special Education Teachers
Patricia Thomas Cegelka and Jose Luis Alvarado, San Diego State University, and Suzanne Fitch, The Institute for Effective Education 169

Defining Effective Leadership Practices In Rural Special Education
Harvey A. Rude, University of Northern Colorado; Steven C. Street, University of North Dakota 176

The Electronic Enhancement Of Supervision Project (EESP)
Catherine Shea and Carolyn Babione, Indiana University Southeast 181

Enhancing Teacher Partnerships: Innovations In Professional Skills Development
James Burton and Lynn McMullen, West Virginia University 187

Evolution Of The University Of Utah's Rural Teacher Preparation Program: Partnerships For Change
Joan P. Sebastian and John C. Mayhew, University of Utah 191

Finding And Keeping The Best: A Rural Regional Partnership
Lisa R. Churchill, Mary C. Jensen, and Michelle Cepello, California State University, Chico 195

Implementing And Evaluating Effective Professional Development In Functional Behavioral Assessment In Rural Schools
Katherine Mitchem and Ann Richards, West Virginia University; Deborah Wells, Monongalia County Schools 200

Pre-Teachers Evaluate University-School Partnerships For Curriculum Adaptation And Access For Students With Disabilities In Rural Classrooms
Billie L. Friedland and Lynn Walz, Eastern Illinois University 206

Predictive Factors For The Enrollment Of African American Students In Special Education Preservice Programs
Rebecca Newcom Belcher, Lincoln University 213

Rural/Urban Partnerships: A Model For Increasing The Quality Of Inclusive Practices
Gayle Melville and Myra Rogers, Southeastern Louisiana University; James Miller, University of New Orleans; Suzanne Martin, University of Central Florida 218

University And School District Partners Go The Distance To "Grow" Special Education Teachers In Rural Communities
Ronda Menlove and Benjamin Lignugaris-Kraft, Utah State University 222

Utah State University Doctoral Program In Special Education And Rehabilitation With A Specialization In The Use Of Information Technology In Special Education Teacher Preparation
Melina Alexander, Timothy Slocum, Donald Stenhoff, and Bryan Davey, Utah State University 228

The Value Of Partnerships In Preparing Special Education Teachers In A Rural Setting
Carol Adkins, Northern Arizona University 231

Technology

A Distance Learning Approach To Reducing Shortages In Rural Special Education Personnel
Stephen W. Tonelson, Robert A. Gable, Cheryl S. Baker, and Jane M. Hager, Old Dominion University 236

The Application Of Technology Integrated Into Curriculum Design Classes
Melina Alexander, Benjamin Lignugaris/Kraft, Bryan Davey, and Donald Stenhoff, Utah State University 240

Distance Learning As An Instructional Tool
Gloria M. Palma, North Carolina A&T State University 241

Measuring Instructor And Student Behaviors In Distance Learning Courses
Jennifer Grisham-Brown, Belva C. Collins, and John W. Schuster, University of Kentucky 244

Mentor2mentor: Peer Mentoring Of Special Education Teachers Using Technology
Carole A. Milner, Minnesota State University, Mankato 247

An Online Mild-Moderate Teacher Preparation Proram
Theodore J. Montemurro, Chris Hagie, and Steve Zlotolow, San Jose State University 252

Preference Of Students' Response And Outcomes Of Distance Education Course Evaluation
Donald M. Stenhoff, Ronda Menlove, Bryan Davey, and Melina Alexander, Utah State University 254

Project FITT – Facilitating Inclusion Through Technology
Debbie Keasler and Joe Nolan, Sothwestern Oklahoma State University 261

Using Technology In Special Education Teacher Training
Gail Peterson Craig, University of Wisconsin-Superior 263

Web-Based Professional Development For Rural Special Educators
Barbara Ludlow, West Virginia University; Michael Duff, Discover Video Productions 267

When Face To Face Won't Work: Internet-Based Focus Groups
Robert S. Cook and Sarah Rule, Utah State University 269

Transition

Issues Important For Rural Students Post Secondary Educational Success
Richard Strasburg, West Virginia University 276

The Transition Of Special Needs Students To Kayenta From Outlying Communities: Partnerships Between Schools And Districts
Connie Heimbecker, Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson, Mary Helen Begay, Brian Bradley, Nellie McCarty, Jacob Nelson, Armanda Gamble, Catherine Medina, Bernita Nelson, Bobbi Pettigrew, Karen Sealander, Jody Smith, Maria Snyder, Sherri White, Marsha Whitehair, Denise Redsteeer, and Greg Prater, Northern Arizona University 277

Other

A Collaborative Approach To Crisis Response In Rural Schools
Michael Cunningham, Willamette Education Service District 284

Developing Rural Support Groups Or "To Dream The Impossible Dream"
Guy H. Gilberts, Chadron State College 288

Resources For Educators, Administrators And Families
Suzanne Ripley, NICHCY, Mario Payne, HEATH 292

Teaming Up For Low Incidence Training A Cooperative Educational Personnel Preparation Program For Teachers Of the Blind And Visually Impaired
Michael E. Sullivan, Marshall University 293

ACRES

American Council on Rural Special Education

Welcome to the published proceedings of the American Council on Rural Special Education National Conference, held on March 29-31, 2001 in San Diego, California. The ACRES Annual National Conference is the only national conference devoted entirely to rural special education issues. It is especially valuable for educators, preservice educators, administrators, service providers, parents, and policy makers to share information and address critical issues that affect the delivery of services for individuals with special needs living in rural areas.

The theme of this year's conference was "Growing Partnerships for Rural Special Education." This proceedings document contains an excellent compilation of papers that have been arranged in twelve topical strands. The papers represent a wide variety of approaches to the issues that are of paramount importance to those concerned with rural special education. We are excited about the quality and diversity of the papers that have been submitted, and we hope that these proceedings will provide you with information that is helpful and informative.

Jack Mayhew, Ph. D.
Program Chair

Impacting Governmental Policy

Mary Susan E. Fishbaugh
Montana State University—Billings
(406) 657-2890
mfishbaugh@msubillings.edu

ONE-ROOM SCHOOLS IN MONTANA AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY: 1999-2001

Background

Montana has 80 to 100 operating one- or two-room rural schools involving multi-grade classrooms. A study of these schools is important for several reasons. First, the study is important historically. One-room schools are a piece of Americana. Documentation of one-room schools at this time will preserve a bit of history.

Second, one-room schools have much to tell us about inclusion of students with different abilities, multi-grade grouping, student cooperative learning, peer-mediated learning, and building a community of learners, all current topics in education. One-room schools have been perfecting each of these areas by default, if not by design, since their inception. A look at the processes used in one-room schools can inform practice in larger schools.

Third, the study can investigate professional feelings of isolation, means of continuing professional education, and impact of technology in remote, rural schools. A continuing issue in rural education is teacher turnover. Comparing rates of teacher turnover in different schools with an investigation of why teachers came to the school, why they stay, or why they leave will impact strategies to recruit and retain rural educators.

Project Goals and Objectives

Goal I Locate and describe operating one- and two-room schools in Montana (1999/2001)

Goal II Investigate school practices and impact on learners (2000/2002)
- Inclusion of students with special education needs
- Cooperative learning
- Peer-mediated instruction
- Effect of small school community on student behavior

Goal III Investigate teacher issues and impact of technology (2001/2003)
- Teacher recruitment/retention issues in small rural schools.
- Impact of technology on student learning and teacher isolation/continuing professional development

Plan of Operation

Phase I: Locating and Describing Operating One- and Two-room Schools in Montana

The first phase has involved visiting each of the operating one- or two-room schools in Montana. Because of the number of schools, inaccessibility, and campus responsibilities, this phase of the project is taking longer than the one year originally projected. This phase includes taking photos of each school and a survey with the following information:

- Current statistics with regard to students and teacher(s).
- A brief history.
- A story unique to that school.

The product for this phase will be a book entitled, *Montana's One-Room Schools at the Turn of the Century: 1999-2001.*

Phase II: Investigating School Practices and Impact on Learners

The second and third phase of the study will involve choosing one or two schools from each of the five special education regions in Montana for in-depth ethnographic study. Phase II will focus on school practices and their impact on the learners. Faculty will investigate inclusion, cooperative learning, peer-mediated learning, and the effect of contributions to the professional literature and conference presentations.

Phase III: Investigating Teacher Issues and Impact of Technology

The third phase of the study will focus on the teachers in the schools. This phase will involve teacher recruitment/retention in remote, rural schools and their continuing professional development. During this phase, the impact of technology on both student learning and teacher professional development will be investigated. The products for this phase will be a monograph that recounts a historical perspective of the rural teacher turnover problem and suggests directions for future practice and a practical guide for optimal student use of available technology.

Summary

This paper has outlined a multi-year study involving currently operating one-, or two-room schools in the state of Montana. The proposed conference presentation will report results of the first year of the study with pictures of the schools first-year survey responses. Results from the three phases of this study will have impact on rural education policy development and implications for the future of rural education.

Suzanne M. Martin, Ph.D
University of Central Florida
College of Education, Room 309
P.O. Box 161992
Orlando, Florida 32816-1992

Jane M. Williams, Ph.D., & Robert K. Hess, Ph.D
Arizona State University West
P.O. Box 37100
Phoenix, AZ 85069-7100

PERSONNEL PREPARATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES IN RURAL AREAS: THE STATE OF THE ART

Introduction

Delivering quality educational programming in rural settings[1] has always posed particular challenges to students, their families, and service providers. Economic and social difficulties, such as lack of financial resources to support educational services because of low wages and poverty, make service delivery issues particularly problematic in rural areas (Duncan, 1999; Stern, 1994; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994). In addition, geographic barriers such as mountains, lack of paved highways, and large distances between cities and towns create additional challenges (Dewees, 1999). Low numbers of students with disabilities in small schools, as well as difficulties recruiting and retaining special educators, intensify the difficulties of ensuring that students with disabilities receive quality special education and related services (Collins, 1999; Mullins, Morris, & Reinoehl, 1997; Westling & Whitten, 1996).

These difficulties, as well as lack of adequate facilities and available technology, also make implementing a comprehensive personnel preparation program in rural areas difficult (Dewees, 1999; Howley & Barker, 1997; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1996). Since 19% of schools and 9% of students in the United States are located in rural areas (U.S. Department of Education, 2000), it is critical that teacher preparation programs focus on the needs of rural practitioners (Collins, 1999; Education Commission of the States, 1999).

Service Delivery Issues

The IDEA of 1997 reiterates the mandate that students with disabilities receive their education with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1997). Each year, the percentage of students with disabilities in general education settings increases. For example, as indicated by the 21st Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, during the 1996-97 school year, more than 95% of students with disabilities, ages 6 through 21, received a portion of their education in general education settings (U.S. Department of Education, 1999c). Students with disabilities in rural settings are more likely to receive their instruction in general education settings than their counterparts in urban or suburban settings (Sack, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 1996). There are many reasons for these differences. Small schools, fewer students with disabilities, and lack of resources, including qualified teachers are but a few. These issues limit the ability of many rural schools to offer the array of service delivery models that are available in suburban or urban settings (American Association of School Administrators, 1999; Stern, 1994).

Personnel Preparation Issues

The need for restructuring personnel preparation programs to meet the increasing need for qualified personnel in rural settings is not new, although it may have intensified since more students with disabilities are receiving their instruction within general education classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 1999c). Data on teacher educators in rural areas suggest that the goal of the U.S. Department of Education, i.e., having a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom, has not been attained (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). According to the American Council on Education (1999), teachers avoid high-poverty schools, and schools in high poverty areas, whether inner city or rural, have the highest number of unqualified teachers. Similarly, the U.S. General Accounting Office reported that rural schools have difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers due to lower salaries and geographic isolation (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994). Stern (1994) corroborated this finding in her report, The Condition of Education in Rural Schools. Westling and Whitten (1996) reported that only 57% of rural special educators planned to still be teaching in rural areas within five years. Though data abounds regarding the difficulties recruiting and retaining teachers in rural areas, Collins (1999) observed "few states have developed specific programs to address the problems of rural teacher recruitment and retention" (p.2).

---

[1] According to the U.S. Department of Education, "an area designated as rural is an area with 2,500 inhabitants or fewer; and or a population density of less than 1,000 per square mile; it does not have a Census Urbanized Area Code." (U. S. Department of Education, 1999b, p. 120).

Difficulties recruiting and retaining teachers certified to work with students with disabilities in rural settings are intensified by the demands of the job. Teachers in rural areas often feel social, cultural, and professional isolation from their colleagues as well as from research libraries and colleges and universities (Collins, 1999.) They often teach students with varying abilities, often within the same classroom, and they are responsible for many non-instructional activities, such as coaching and administrative duties (Morgan & Demchak, 1998). Because of these factors, as well as others, providing professional development opportunities for teachers and other service providers in rural districts is very difficult (Hillkirk, Chang, Oettinger, Saban, & Villet, 1998).

To date, however, there has been no systematic investigation of the status of the implementation of IDEA in rural settings or issues facing teacher education programs that prepare personnel to work with students with disabilities in these areas. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the following research questions:

1. What difficulties are teacher education programs in rural areas experiencing in preparing teachers to work with students with disabilities?
2. What strategies are being used to address personnel preparation, recruitment, and retention of special education personnel in rural areas?
3. What difficulties and challenges are being experienced implementing the requirements of IDEA of 1997 in rural areas? What supports are available to assist in the implementation of IDEA?

Method

The authors began studying the issues related to the implementation of IDEA in rural settings and the preparation of teachers to deliver services to students with disabilities during the fall of 1997. Based on concerns, challenges, and possible solutions provided during a focus group at the ACRES conference in1998, we constructed a questionnaire to gather data in a more systematic way about personnel preparation, recruitment and retention and service delivery issues. Section one of the survey collected information concerning the respondent's position and school setting. Sections two through four included the recruitment and retention, service delivery and implementation questions.

In October 1999, we mailed the questionnaire to 166 members of ACRES. We followed the initial mailing with a telephone call to non-respondents, faxing a second copy of the questionnaire to those subjects. In February 2000, we conducted a second mail-out to nonrespondents. We followed the second mail-out with a final telephone call.

Results

The questionnaire was returned by 95 (57%) of the 166 members of ACRES. Twelve (7%) of the questionnaires were deleted because the respondents indicated they were unfamiliar with the subject matter or their position was not in a rural setting and hence they could not complete the questionnaire. Thus, 83 questionnaires were analyzed, representing a 50% response rate.

Sixty percent (50) of the respondents were university/college professors; 18% were special education supervisors/administrators; 6% were SEA/LEA administrators; 5% were special education teachers. The remainder held the following positions: 2%, general education supervisor/administrator; 1%, related services providers; and 6% listed "other." The "other" category was comprised of national clearinghouse personnel, staff development personnel, and consultants. The majority of respondents (78.3%) worked in rural settings; 4.8% indicated they worked in remote settings; 8.4% indicated they worked in both rural and remote settings; 8.4% did not respond to the question.

The largest number of respondents, 37.3%, indicated that their teacher preparation programs are for special educators only 36.1% reported combined general education/special education programs; 30.1% reported that their teacher preparation programs were for general education majors only. Fifty-two percent of the respondents (43) provided enrollment data, program data, and certification data for personnel preparation programs. The data indicated that the number of students enrolled in teacher preparation programs ranged from 9 for a small program conferring a Bachelor's degree to the largest program of 11,500 full and part-time students conferring Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. degrees.

Respondents identified distance to campus, retention of qualified personnel, recruitment of personnel into the program, proximity to shopping and cultural and sporting events, and salary schedule as the major difficulties in their teacher preparation programs as a result of being located in rural settings.

Half of the respondents (42) indicated that they are using practicum sites to ensure that teachers have the specific knowledge and skills needed to work with students with disabilities. Slightly fewer than half of the respondents (39) indicated that they were using a specific class to prepare their students; about a third of the respondents (29) indicated their programs were combined for prospective general and special educators. The distance learning strategies being utilized included internet, satellite transmission, compressed video, and Interactive Instructional Television (IITV).

Seventy-five percent of the respondents reported shortages of special education teachers; 51% of the respondents reported shortages of related services personnel. Thirty-one percent of the respondents reported shortages of psychologists and general education teachers; 25% of the respondents reported shortages of transition specialists. The top three recruitment strategies were professional development opportunities, paid educational tuition, and salary; the top three retention strategies were on-site professional development opportunities, paid educational opportunities, and salary incentives. Although salary was ranked third as the recruitment and retention strategy being implemented by the respondents, respondents identified salary as the strategy that was working the best for both recruitment and retention.

Thirty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that finding qualified personnel to conduct assessments was a major difficulty in implementing the evaluation/ reevaluation requirements of IDEA. Slightly more than one-third of the respondents reported that linking annual goals to the general education curriculum and determining how the child's disability affects his/her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, was a difficulty. Twenty-three percent of the respondents indicated that employing behavioral strategies and/or positive behavioral supports to students was problematic. Greater difficulty appears to be in implementing the discipline provisions of IDEA, including designing behavioral intervention plans (34%), conducting functional behavioral assessments (30%), conducting a manifestation determination (30%), and determining an interim alternative educational setting (25%). Fifty-one percent of the respondents reported that a lack of qualified personnel was presenting a challenge to providing the services needed by students with disabilities in rural areas. Distance was ranked second by respondents as a challenge to implementing the requirements of IDEA.

When asked what supports were available to assist with the implementation of IDEA of 1997, respondents indicated that it was personnel, with support from the local and state education agencies, who were instrumental in assisting with meeting the requirements of IDEA of 1997. Respondents also indicated that strong family involvement and strong interagency support were helping meet the needs of students.

Discussion

Our findings that institutions of higher education are having difficulty recruiting prospective teachers to their programs because of distance from campus and proximity to shopping and cultural and sporting events are consistent with the findings of other researchers (Collins, 1999). The study also reinforced the findings of other studies that shortages of qualified personnel are most acute among special education teachers (Special education teacher shortage hits districts hard, 2000).

Our findings indicate that institutions of higher education in rural areas are utilizing specific coursework, coupled with practical experiences, to prepare professionals to meet the needs of students with disabilities in general education settings. This finding is consistent with reports from other institutions that they have recently revised their coursework (Corbett, Kilgore, & Sindelar, 1998; Lesar, Brenner, Habel, & Coleman, 1997). Our findings that approximately one- third of teacher preparation programs are offering combined special and general education programs suggest fewer institutions of higher education in rural settings are restructuring their programs in this manner than in other geographic areas (Lowenbraun & Nolen, 1998; Peterson & Beloin, 1998).

The fact that only 40% of the respondents indicated using distance learning strategies for providing professional development was surprising. Distance learning has become an increasingly common, as well as powerful, tool for providing professional development in rural settings (Bull, Winterowd, & Kimball, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 1999a). One explanation for these results may be that many rural schools lack computers and telecommunication capabilities to provide internet access and participate in distance learning opportunities (Dewees,1999; Howley & Barker, 1997). A second explanation could be the lack of training in the use of technology needed for the distance delivery (Ferrell, Wright, Persichitte, & Lowell, 2000).

With regard to the finding that opportunities for professional development outranked salary as both a recruitment and retention tool, even though salary was ranked as the strategy that was working most successfully, the researchers were not surprised. As stated eloquently by Quality Counts (2000), "salaries alone won't keep teachers in the classroom" (p. 8). Indeed, it is the opportunity for professional development that provides the incentive to keep teachers refreshed and in the classroom.

It is interesting that none of the respondents indicated implementing either induction or mentoring programs as either a recruitment incentive or a retention strategy. These strategies are continuing to show results for recruiting and retaining teachers (Boyer & Gillespie, 2000; Quality Counts, 2000; Wald, 1998; Whitaker, 2000). However, as reported earlier, Collins (1999) observed that, "few states have developed specific programs to address the problems of rural teacher recruitment and retention" (p.2). The lack of these programs in rural areas is particularly disturbing when one reviews the results from the U.S. Department of Education's Baccalaureate and Beyond, a longitudinal study tracking teachers in their first years. Results cited in Quality Counts (2000) indicated that "teachers who did not participate in an induction program in their schools or districts were nearly twice as likely to leave the classroom (20 percent) as those who participated in such a program (11 percent)" (p. 17). Particularly in rural areas where teachers are at a premium, mentoring and induction programs appear to be most appropriate.

The finding that many personnel are continuing to find writing and implementing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that are consistent with the federal regulations difficult also is distressing. The results reflect that three of the new provisions are particularly problematic to practitioners – namely, linking results of evaluations to the general education curriculum, determining how the child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, and conducting functional behavioral assessments and designing functional behavioral plans.

Our findings show that rural areas are relying on their personnel as well as other supports, including state and local education agency personnel, interagency resources, and family members. This fact reiterates the importance of local resources in the delivery of services to children and youth with disabilities. This finding reinforces the call for personnel in rural areas to pool their resources though clustering and collaboratives (Chow, Tyner, Estrin, & Koelsch, 1994; Nachtigal & Parker, 1990).

Recommendations

1. State departments of education and local education agencies must be involved with institutions of higher education in the preparation of qualified personnel to meet the needs of students with disabilities in rural settings.
2. While institutions of higher education cannot decrease the distance to sporting and cultural events and shopping, they could research ways for bringing these amenities to the campus.
3. Institutions of higher education in rural areas should consider restructuring their programs to include both general and special educators, particularly since many programs are achieving success with this arrangement.

4. Institutions of higher education and local education agencies must form collaborative partnerships to maximize the utilization of distance education techniques. These entities should also research sources such as Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZ-ABs) to add such capacity to their schools and districts. (See Dewees, 1999).
5. Institutions of higher education and state and local education agencies must continue to provide professional development activities for their faculty members since professional development is key to both recruitment and retention of practicing professionals.
6. State and local education agencies must devise aggressive recruitment and retention packages that include salary incentives; allocation of travel time and money to conferences and other professional development activities; provision of time to consult with colleagues; signing bonuses, housing allowances, and lucrative benefits packages.
7. Institutions of higher education, as well as state and local education agencies, must provide opportunities for practitioners and administrators to become proficient with implementing the new requirements of IDEA.
8. Federal and state agencies must implement policy and funding initiatives to support the preparation of personnel in rural areas and the operation of strong networking and collaborative programs in rural areas.

References

American Association of School Administrators. (1999). AASA online advocacy. Available: http://www/aasa/org/Advocacy/2-1-99rural.htm

American Council on Education. (1999). To touch the future: Transforming the way teachers are taught. An action agenda for college and university presidents. Washington, D.C.: Author.

Boyer, L., & Gillespie, P. (2000). Keeping the committed: The importance of induction and support programs for new special educators. Teaching Exceptional Children, 33(6), 10-15.

Bull, K. S., Winterowd, C. L., & Kimball, S. L. (1999). Uses of the internet: Rural special education materials for teachers and parents. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 18(1), 12-22.

Chow, S., Tyner, K., Estrin, E. T., & Koelsch, N. (1994). Building professional practice consortia: Strategies for systemic reform in rural schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 377 020).

Collins, T. (1999). Attracting and retaining teachers in rural areas. Charleston, WV: The ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. EDO-RC-99-7.

Corbett, N. L., Kilgore, K. L., & Sindelar, P. T. (1998). "Making sense" in a collaborative teacher education program: Lessons from Project PART students. Teacher Education and Special Education, 21(4), 293-305.

Dewees, S. (1999). Improving rural school facilities for teaching and learning. Charleston, WV: The ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. EDO-RC-99-8.

Duncan, C. M. (1999). Worlds apart: Why poverty persists in rural America. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Education Commission of the States. (1999). Teacher recruitment. Clearinghouse Notes. Denver, CO: Author.

Ferrell, K., Wright, C., Persichitte, K., & Lowell, N. (2000). Capitalizing distance technologies to benefit rural children and youth with vision impairments. In J. Lemke (Ed.). Capitalizing on leadership in rurals special education: Making a difference for children and families. (pp. 153-157). Proceedings of the Annual National Conference of the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) Conference held in Alexandria, VA, March 16-18, 2000.

Hillkirk, K., Chang, V., Oettinger, L. A., Saban, A., & Villet, C. (1998). Supporting ongoing professional learning in rural schools. Rural Educator, 19(3), 20-24.

Howley, C., & Barker, B. (1997). The national information infrastructure: Keeping rural values and purposes in mind. Charleston, WV: Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. EDO-RC-97-4.

Lesar, S., Benner, S. M., Habel, J., & Coleman, L. (1997). Preparing general education teachers for inclusive settings: A constructivist teacher education program. Teacher Education and Special Education, 20(3), 204-220.

Lowenbraun, S., & Nolen, S. B. (1998). Implementing change in a research university: Constructivist team teaching in a general education teacher education program. Teacher Education and Special Education, 21(1), 34-46.

Morgan, C. R., & Demchak, M. (1998). Involving building administrators in planning for inclusive educational programs. Rural Educator, 20(2), 26-30.

Mullins, F., Morris, S., & Reinoehl, K. (1997). Recrutiment and retention of special educators and related services personnel: State plan and state strategic plan provisions. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children, National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education.

Nachtigal, P., & Parker, S.D. (1990). Clustering: Working together for better schools. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 338 459.

Peterson, M., & Beloin, K. S. (1998). Teaching the inclusive teacher: Restructuring the mainstreaming course in teacher education. Teacher Education and Special Education, 21(4), 306-318.

Quality counts: Who should teach? (2000). Education Week, XIX(18), Bethesda, MD.

Sack, J. (2000). Segregated schools are more likely to include disabled students in regular classrooms out of financial necessity. Education Week, XIX,(32), 12.

Special education teacher shortage hits districts hard. (2000). Special Education Report, 26(19). Alexandria, VA: Capitol Publications, 1-2.

Stern, J. D. (Ed.). (1994). The condition of education in rural schools. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Education Research and Improvement, Programs for the Improvement of Practice, PIP94-1106. (ERIC Document Repoduction Service No. ED 371 935.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, Public Law 105-17 (June 4, 1997).

United States Department of Education. (1996). To assure the free appropriate public education of all children with disabilities: Eighteenth annual report to Congress on the implementation of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Washington, DC: Author.

United States Department of Education. (1997). The seven priorities of the U. S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: Author.

United States Department of Education. (1999a). Distance education at postsecondary education institutes: 1997-98. Washington, DC: NCES Statistical Analysis Report, NCES 2000-13.

United States Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (1999b). National Center for Education Statistics Survey Report 1999-324: Key statistics on public elementary and secondary schools and agencies: School year 1995-96. Washington, DC: Author.

United States Department of Education. (1999c) To assure the free appropriate public education of all children with disabilities: Twenty-first annual report to Congress on the implementation of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Washington, DC: Author.

United States Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (2000). Overview of elementary and secondary schools and districts: School year 1998-99. National Center for Education Statistics. Statistics in Brief. 2000-333. Washington, DC: Author.

United States General Accounting Office. (1994). Rural children: Increasing poverty rates pose educational challenges. Washington, D.C.: Author.

United States General Accounting Office. (1996). School facilities: America's schools report differing conditions (GAO Report No. GAO/HEHS-96-103). Gaithersburg, MD: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 397 508).

Wald, J. L. (1998). Retention of special education professionals: A practical guide of strategies and activities for educators and administrators. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children, The National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education.

Westling, D. L., & Whitten, T. M. (1996). Rural special education teachers' plans to continue or leave their teaching positions. Exceptional Children, 62(4), 319-335.

Whitaker, S. D. (2000). Mentoring beginning special education teachers and the relationship to attribution. Exceptional Children, 66(4), 546-566.

Holly Pae, Ed.D.
University of South Carolina Spartanburg
800 University Way
Spartanburg, SC 29303

REFORM THEORY INTO PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY EXAMINATION OF WEST VIRGINIA'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING THROUGH SITE-BASED PARTNERSHIP DECISION-MAKING PRACTICES

This study examined West Virginia's reform efforts to understand how faculty senate's site based management practices effect school restructuring to facilitate inclusion. Several interests prompted this topic's selection. First, this is the first time that a reform, at the national level, emphasizes a goal that gives recognition to individuals with disabilities. Of consequence, we know little about how the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and effort to support inclusive schooling impact education when presented within this context. Second, the goal is to build a restructured, interfaced coordinated service delivery system that deals more effectively with student diversity. In West Virginia each school responded by developing and implementing a Strategic Integration Plan that essentially details how each school adopts the principles of the IDEA on a systemic level. This process provides insight into the levels by which special and regular educators confront their differences and rethink conventional methods of practice. Finally, today's reform strategy seeks change by combining a top down and bottom up approach. West Virginia's efforts provide an opportunity to examine this undertaking and to determine the extent to which this strategy provides schools with a method to envision and practice the spirit of the reform.

A theoretical framework was established to guide the purpose of this study. From a literature review this study identified several theoretical propositions that highlight how current reform's combined components champion a significance. These key components in turn served as the underpinning that informed the study's focus, method of investigation, and process of data examination. The statements below summarize these factors and propositions contained therein:

Reform Strategy Factors:

- A top down change strategy provides an effective method for disseminating reform mandates (Goertz, 1986, 1988; Grossman, Kirst, Negash, & Schmidt-Posner, 1985; Kaye, 1985).
- A top down change strategy alone can not assure that schools carry out such changes in the classroom (Firestone, 1990; Fullan, 1994; Goodlad, 1992; Policy Analysis for California Education, 1986).
- A bottom up change strategy provides an effective method for increasing teacher participation (Taylor & Bogotch, 1994; Taylor & Teddlie, 1992; Weiss, 1992; Wohlsetter, Smyer & Mohrman, 1994).
- A bottom up change strategy, alone does not lead to changes in classroom practice (Elmore, 1993; Hallinger, Murphy & Hausman, 1991; Taylor & Bogotch, 1994; Taylor and Teddlie, 1992; Wohlsetter, Smyer & Mohrman, 1994).

Special Education as a Change Agent Factors:

- From a philosophical vantage point, IDEA's principles and practice for providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) create a contingency requiring educators to conduct an ethical deliberation of schooling (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995; Lieberman, 1996; Paul & Ward, 1996; Stainback & Stainback, 1990, 1992).
- From a pragmatic vantage point, IDEA's principles and practice for providing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in a LRE create a contingency requiring educators to redefine the school's model of a professional bureaucracy (Skrtic, 1991a, 1991b, 1995).

Reform Strategy Proposition 1:

- Combined top down, bottom up strategies create a more comprehensive and coherent model for change (Firestone, Fuhrman & Kirst, 1990; Fullan, 1994; Peters & Waterman, 1982).

Rationale

- Mandates from above guide the central direction of change and protect the core value it intends to achieve. Decision-making from below provides flexibility and encourages teacher ownership to facilitate goal implementation (Fullan, 1994; Peters & Waterman, 1982).

Reform Strategy Proposition 2:

- Today's student-centered initiatives coupled with decentralized decision making create a comprehensive, multifaceted, systematic change process (Goertz, Floden and O'Day, 1996; Lavely & McCarthy, 1995; Schrag, 1993).
- By adopting school wide student centered practices, teachers break their relative autonomy and make necessary for the coordination of teams and individuals to support each other (Duchnowski, Townsend, Hocutt, & McKinney, 1995; Stainback & Stainback, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1996; Villa & Thousand, 1990).
- Student centeredness challenges teachers to question their standardization of practice and to seek new instructional approaches that create a classroom learning atmosphere in which students of varying abilities and interests can achieve their potential (Stainback & Stainback, 1996).

From these patterns stated above, the study postulated that the degree to which faculty senate members engage in developing strategic plans for inclusion correlates with the extent to which their practices reflect a change. Stated differently, this study sought to examine whether schools with a higher perceived participatory role in decision making achieve a different level of inclusion then that of schools with a lower perceived participatory role in decision making. Ultimately, the study's purpose was to examine the degree to which a top down, bottom change strategy combined with a child centered inclusive change goal served as a catalyst of reform.

Methods

This study used quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. It organized these features by using a multiple case study strategy. Each school was a subject of an individual case and each case served a specific purpose within the overall scope of inquiry. The rationale underlying this process, therefore, followed a cross-experiment rather than a within-experiment logic of design. Each case served as a unit to predict similar results (a literal replication) or to produce contrary results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication, Yin, 1984).

Subjects

Through a census selection process, the study selected four case studies that differed and compared by rank order percentage of students receiving special education. Two counties with high (22.17%, 20.20%) and low percentages (15.97% and 14.26%) were selected (West Virginia Department of Education, 1997). From this pool, four schools containing grades' six, seven, and eight were identified. This selection criterion was used because it included schools that have already identified the majority of students eligible for special education services, given a majority of students served in special education are identified by this time in their school career (U.S. Department of Education, 1995) and excluded high schools where drop out and vocational programs decrease the number of students who actually receive special education services. Because the initial sample included all middle schools in the state of West Virginia, it included the distribution of the state's geographic and demographic diversity (large and small, urban and rural).

Instrumentation and Procedure

This study employed four data collection strategies: artifact examination; observation; teacher survey; and teacher interview. Each strategy was conducted over a sixteen week period between the months of August and December 1999.

Artifact Examination. The artifact examination involved an analysis of each case study's Strategic Plan for Managing the Inclusion of Students with Special Needs into the General Classroom. The purpose was to gain insight into the school's belief structure and behaviors by conducting an unobtrusive examination of the information that they generated for their own purposes. To guide this process, a content analysis protocol was developed to examine each of the plan's six components in relation to the requirements and suggestions described in the A Strategic Planning Guide for West Virginia Faculty Senates (1994).

Survey. The purpose of the survey was to determine the relationship between how the participants perceived their role as a faculty senate member and the degree to which their school integrated students with disabilities in the regular classroom. Questions from the Effective Practice Checklist: Building Level provided in A Strategic Planning Guide for West Virginia Faculty Senates (West Virginia Department of Education, 1994) was used to develop fifty question statements. Using a Likert scale the participants responded by selecting a score that best reflects their beliefs and opinions about the statement. The response scale was as follows: one (never), two (rarely), three (sometimes), four (usually), and five (always). The survey also provided five additional questions that briefly asked for information about their educational background and teaching responsibilities.

The survey was piloted at two middle schools with sixty-eight teachers. These pilot survey responses were factor analyzed to reduce the data. The analysis also examined each item individually and in relation to the entire survey to establish reliability, validity, and to shorten as necessary. The factor analysis and reliability procedures eliminated twenty-five questions. A component factor analysis of the remaining thirty questions created four scales: Professional Practice, (reliability alpha of .8514); School Site Based Management Climate, (reliability alpha of .9155); Collaborative Teaming, (reliability alpha of .9017); and Student Involvement, (reliability alpha .8387). This survey was disseminated at each case study's first faculty Senate Meeting.

Observation. Over a four month period of time, multiple of observations were conducted to enrich the researcher's understanding of the climate and context of the setting being studied. Field notes were used to record observations at a minimum of two faculty senate meetings and thirteen all day visitations at each site. These field notes: characterized the substance and nature of the interaction that occurred at the faculty senate meetings; described events that occurred periodically throughout the school day; detailed classroom instructional activities; and recorded conversations and informal discussions between teachers and researcher.

Interviews. A loosely constructed interview protocol was used to conduct interviews. The protocol contained questions related to three areas of interest: teacher involvement with inclusion strategic plan process; opinion and knowledge about strategic plan's components; and evaluation of the plan's impact upon practice. During the interview, responses were audio taped and recorded using the note taking procedures described by Dillman (1978) and Spradley (1979).

Data Analysis and Presentation

Using a cross-experiment design, the data analysis organized the data into four case study profiles. Each individual case thereby consisted of a "whole" study. To create the individual cases, appropriate analysis of the embedded units (four data collection strategies) was conducted. A Content Analysis protocol as described by Putt and Springer (1989) guided the strategic inclusion plan content data analysis. Observation field notes and interviews were analyzed in accordance with established principles of qualitative research analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: Spradley, 1979) and reduced by sorting each data source into categories (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). The teacher survey composite scores were calculated after principle component analysis of the survey was conducted. A pattern matching process based on the theoretical propositions was conducted to seek convergent evidence regarding the facts and conclusions for the case. Each case's conclusions were then examined in relation to the other individual cases. Ultimately, this comparison determined whether their outcome patterns coincided or contradicted with emerging theoretical predictions.

Results

The results listed below state the major findings identified in the cross case analysis.

1. The degree to which faculty senate members engaged in developing strategic integration plans did not correlate with the extent to how their structural model of schooling ultimately changed. The primary impetus for change instead was largely attributed to how the larger system initially redefined the teachers' positions within the organization.
2. Three of the case studies restructured their service delivery model by redefining the special educator's role. The system restructured the staff patterns by merging existing programs. By interfacing teacher responsibilities, the outcomes consequently advanced the system to some degree to become a more cohesive, coordinated model.
3. Schools have unique set of characteristics that effect how change is internalized. In each case the faculty senates' integration plans supported yet tailored how change was implemented. The faculty senate thereby served as an internal force that pushed up on the changes that external forces sent down.
4. The faculty senates' integration plans primarily addressed staffing, planning, and training needs to facilitate an integrative model of schooling and gave limited attention to activities that related to the teacher's classroom practice and student involvement.

5. The case studies' special education enrollment and county percentage of students receiving special education services did not impact the school's level of integration.
6. Staffing patterns greatly impact teacher collaboration levels. The levels of collaboration achieved was relative to the teacher's team affiliation and classroom model assignment.
7. The special educator who taught in collaboration with a regular educator shared a greater level of reciprocity in determining classroom practice than that of the special educators who provided consultative services with the regular educator.
8. More than half of the school's special educators continue to work in separate settings and do not have team membership. Special educators not affiliated with a team had the lowest level of interaction with others even if teachers shared student responsibility.
9. The faculty senates in schools with higher levels of integration made different types of decisions than that of faculty senates in schools with lower levels of integration.
10. Schools where faculty senates engage in decision making regarding school and teacher related concerns had a higher level of integration then that of schools where faculty senates engage in decision making regarding student concerns.

Discussion

In this study a pattern emerged. Each case study profile's revealed similar results (a literal replication) and contrary results for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication, Yin, 1984). From a systemic point of view, the impetus for change in each case was largely attributed to how the larger system initially redefined the teachers' positions within the organization. The study's conclusions therefore did not find that the degree to which faculty senate members engaged in developing strategic integration plans correlated with the extent to how their structural model of schooling ultimately changed. This is not to say that the schools that were studied did not undergo a restructuring process; rather the faculty senate was not responsible for redefining the delivery model of service. The plan's staffing model instead reflected the degree to which the system induced change and not the degree to which the faculty senate engaged in the plan's development.

An understanding of the bureaucratic nature of schooling provides insight to interpreting these findings. It is known that the schools arrange and define a teacher's position within the organization based on expertise. While the teacher's level of acquired training decreases the organization's need to regulate their work it also reinforces the teachers to perceive their role as important and interdependent to the system's operations. The teacher's sense of professionalism consequently diverts their attention from envisioning a model that questions their position's validity. It is therefore predictable that the restructuring of the school's staffing patterns resulted from changes introduced by the greater system and not by the faculty senate's plans.

In each of the case studies, the faculty senates served as an internal force that pushed up on the changes that external forces sent down. Their plans supported yet tailored how change was implemented. Because each plan differently defined how teachers were to interact, the four case studies ultimately revealed that schools have unique set of characteristics that effect how change is internalized. Each school operated under the same guidelines put forth by the Federal, IDEA, and State, Integrative Schools Initiative mandate, yet each sought different practices to achieve the same goal. From a change strategy perspective, this phenomenon illustrates how top down mandates coupled with school based decision making creates a relationship that is complex, nonlinear, and yet complementary. The mandates from above guided the central direction of change and protected the core value it intended to achieve while the decision making from below provided flexibility and encouraged teacher ownership to facilitate goal implementation.

In three of the case studies, the schools restructured their service delivery model by redefining the special educator's role. Several teachers were assigned to a regular education team to provide collaborative support within in the regular education setting. Because the schools did not hire additional teachers to fulfill this role, the schools essentially decreased the number of separate settings by reassigning the students and special educators to integrated classrooms. Opposed to creating add-ons, the schools merged existing programs. Consequently these efforts advanced the system to some degree to become a more cohesive, coordinated model by interfacing teacher responsibilities. It is noteworthy that the case studies' special education enrollment and county percentage of students receiving special education services did not correlate with the level of integration the schools achieved. Two schools that had a similar number of students with IEPs, one school maintained seven separate classroom settings, whereas the other only had two. These findings reveal that goal achievement is not contingent upon factors, such as student enrollment, over which schools have little control. It instead suggests that outcomes relate to how the schools coordinated their service delivery system to become more cohesive model.

The degree to which the schools achieved a comprehensive, multifaceted level of change remains suspect. Although three schools increased their level of integration by assigning the students to the regular classroom setting and the special educator to their team, more than half of the school's other special educators continue to work in separate settings and do not have team membership. This is problematic because across the four case studies a pattern emerged whereby the teacher's level of collaboration related to their team affiliation and classroom assignment. The highest level of interaction occurred between staff who worked together in the same classroom. Teachers assigned to the same teams likewise had a higher level of interaction than those who were not. Teachers not assigned to a team primarily worked alone regardless if they shared student responsibility. These findings demonstrate how the school's staffing patterns impact teacher's level of collaboration. Furthermore, by assigning a special educator to a team the school not only changed that teacher's role and responsibilities but also to a lesser extent increased the other team member's involvement in determining student programs of study.

Within the teams a pattern emerged with regard to the types of decisions the teachers made and the degree to which classroom practice changed. In the one school where the special educator taught in collaboration with a regular educator, the teacher shared a greater level of reciprocity in determining classroom practice than that in the two schools where the special educator shared consultative services with the regular educator. Across the four case studies however the regular educators reported that their classroom's increase in students with IEPs did not change their practice. The special educators who worked in integrated settings on the other hand reported that their practices changed from determining what to teach to how to support the other teacher's instruction. These findings suggest that the increased level of integration did not result in having an equally compelling impact on whether classroom practice changed.

The reason the data failed to reflect an increased change in classroom practice is difficult to ascertain. The survey data across the four schools reported that teachers perceived to have a higher level of professional practice in comparison to the factors that related to their site base management and collaboration participation. Perhaps teachers do not perceive the increased level of integration as a change in the classroom's composition of student need. Although the literature supports that students with IEPs have similar needs to peers who also have difficulty, it nonetheless calls into question how and the degree to which the teacher's notion of a disability imparts the need to change practice. The school's Strategic plans supports this notion. Each school's plans commonly noted goals and objectives that related to the teacher's staffing, planning, and training needs. The focus was administrative in nature. They primarily dealt with issues that promoted the organizational aspects of change and gave limited attention to activities that related to how teachers facilitate an inclusive environment within the classroom.

The content of the strategic plans and lack of instructional change in classroom questions the degree to that teacher's perceived role in determining decisions impacts their practice. The concerns addressed in the plans are impersonal in the sense that they define teacher opportunity such as the availability of joint planning time. In contrast, items not addressed are personal in that they describe behaviors that teachers must practice. The rationale used to understand why the greater system and not the faculty senate plans created the changes that reorganized the school's staffing pattern may be pertinent. From a change strategy point of view, the bureaucratic structure of schooling may thwart teacher's ability and propensity to make decisions that systematically define the quality of teacher practice. The bureaucracy arranges and defines the teacher's position within the organization in order to maintain a stable environment. This condition impedes the teachers' ability to determine individual's mode of practice, employment, or status. The teacher's level of expertise also loosely couples the teachers within the organization to allow them to work directly with students and less with their peers. As a result, teachers only collectively control their colleagues' practice and lack the standpoint to redefine each other's role within the larger system.

The purpose of this study ultimately sought to examine whether schools with a higher perceived participatory role in decision making achieve a different level of inclusive practices then that of schools with a lower perceived participatory role in decision making. The conclusions demonstrated that the school's level of inclusion had a relationship with the faculty senate's level of involvement with committee decision making and types of decisions the teachers made. The findings however did not ascertain whether this relationship demonstrated a difference in levels of participation but only that there is a difference in the type of decisions.

The emerged pattern revealed that the two case studies with a greater level of integration had fewer faculty senate committees. Their faculty senates spent more time discussing an agenda presented by administration and less time on teacher driven proposals. The majority of their decisions also dealt with concerns that benefit teachers. The two schools with lower levels of integration on the other hand had a greater number of faculty senate committees. They spent more faculty senate time on discussing teacher driven proposals and the majority of their decisions dealt with concerns that benefit students.

These findings suggest that the school's level of integration influences the dynamics of the school's decision making practices. In each case study the majority of the teachers are assigned to team and each team has the opportunity to meet daily during a common planning period. The data supports that these team's decisions primarily concerned their student and classroom practice. The focus of these decisions therefore was to benefit the student. In schools with higher levels of inclusion, it is reasonable to assume that the student composition within the teams has greater diversity and thereby crates less variability across programs. This diversity in turn creates the need for the teams to engage in decision making to address a variety of different concerns. As a result, the teams may decrease faculty senate's need to engage in these types of decisions. In other words, if the team's decisions bring benefit to students that have a greater diversity of need, the role their faculty senates have less need to engage in student related concerns and can focus more on making decisions that benefit the teachers and school.

In contrast the schools with a lower level of inclusion have greater homogeneity within the classroom and a greater level of student diversity across programs. In teams where there is less student diversity the team's decision making process concerns students with fewer differences. As each team concerns different student needs, the variance across programs increases. For example, the team of special educators deal with a different set of student concerns in comparison to the team's decisions that do not have students with IEPs. As a result the school decreases the likelihood that the programs share the same mode of operation. These differences in turn may give rise to the need of faculty senates to seek methods that micro-manage practice across programs. In other words, the level of program variability or seclusion fragment the organization's mode of operation into a series of different units and thereby cause the faculty senates to engage in more student related decisions in response to the school's needs to seek cohesion.

Limitations. Although a repeated pattern emerged among the case studies, the validation of the findings warrants a replication of study. The process, however, needs to recognize that the study's primary focus examined West Virginia's reform efforts. As a result this state specific framework questions the degree to which this study may be replicated in other states. Such practice would require a need to revise the instruments' foci in accordance to that particular state's policy mandates. Each case study was a middle school. In this setting, the majority of the staff are members of teams. Each team teaches the same students and shares a planning period to facilitate collaborative relationships. This organizational structuring differs from the elementary and high school settings where teachers are not assigned to teams. The generalization of findings therefore may not replicate in these other settings. Finally, the data regarding each case studies' special education only includes students with IEPs in the areas of learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and mild and moderate mental impairments. The results therefore are limited to the mild and moderate special education population and do not include students in the severe and multiple or gifted education programs.

Implications. In today's reform, mandates from above send schools guiding principles that favor decentralized practices. In theory, because these efforts combine previous reform's top-down and bottom-up change strategies, they provide a change model that is comprehensive. The findings of this study however suggest that the bureaucratic nature of schooling continues to have an impact on how change translates into practice. To overcome these barriers top down mandates must initially provide the effort to restructure the staffing patterns within the organization if the goal is to change the nature in which teachers interact. Furthermore, it is not enough to examine only practice or policy: the complexity of schooling requires a simultaneous understanding of both. Methods of inquiry therefore need to inform policy and practice in a manner that is meaningful to both.

References

Dillman, D. A. (1978). Mail and telephone surveys: The total design method. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Duchnowski, A., Townsend, B., Hocutt, A., & McKinney, J. (1995). Designing studies that are sensitive to the complexity of inclusion: Creating a knowledge base. In J. L. Paul, H. Rosselli & D. Evans (Eds.), Integrating school restructuring and special education reform, (pp. 373-388). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Elmore, R. F. (1993). School decentralization: Who gains? who loses? In J. Hannaway & C. Carnoy (Eds.), Decentralization and school improvement (pp. 33-54). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Firestone, W. A. (1990). Continuity and incrementalism after all: State responses to the excellence movement. In J. Murphy (Ed.), The educational reform movement of the 1980s: Perspectives and cases (pp. 143-165). Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Firestone, W. Fuhrman, S., & Kirst, M. (1990). An overview of education reform since 1983. In J. Murphy (Ed.), The educational reform movement of the 1980s: Perspectives and cases. (pp. 349-363). Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Fullan, M. G. (1994). Coordinating top-down and bottom-up strategies for educational reform. In R. J. Anson (Ed.), Systemic reform: Perspectives on personalizing education (pp. 7-24). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Glasser, B. G. V. & Strauss, L. L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. Chicago: Aldine.

Goertz, M. E. (1986).State educational standards: A 50 state survey. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Goertz, M. E., Floden, R. E., & O'Day, J. (1996). Studies of educational reform: Systemic reform. (Report No. ORAD 96-132). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED 1.302

Goodlad, J. (1992). On taking school reform seriously. Phi Delta Kappan, 73(3), 232-38.

Grossman, P., Kirst, M., Negash, W., & Schmidt-Posner, J. (1985). Curriculum change in California comprehensive high schools: 1982-83 to 1984-85. Berkeley: Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), University of California.

Hallinger, P., Murphy, J., & Hausman, C. (1991). Conceptualizing school restructuring: Principals' and teachers' perceptions. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Kauffman, J. M., & Hallahan, D. P. (1995). The illusion of full inclusion. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Kaye, L. (1985). Making the grade? Assessing school districts progress on SB 813. Sacramento: California Tax Foundation.

Lavely, L., & McCarthy, M. A. (1995). Early intervention in the context of school reform and inclusion. In J. L. Paul, H. Rosselli, & D. Evans (Eds.), Integrating school restructuring and special education reform (pp. 79-104). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Lieberman, M. L. (1996). Preserving Special Education...for those who need it. In W. C. Stainback & S. B. Stainback (Eds.), Controversial issues confronting special education: Divergent perspectives (2nd ed., pp. 16-27). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (1993). Research in education: A conceptual introduction. New York, NY: HarperCollins College Publishers.

Paul, P. V., & Ward, M. E. (1996). Inclusion paradigms in conflict. Theory into practice, 35(1), 4-11.

Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H. (1982). In search of excellence: Lessons for America's best-run companies. New York: Harper & Row.

Policy Analysis for California Education. (1986). Conditions of education in California, 1986-87. Berkeley CA.: Author.

Putt, A. D., & Springer, A. F. (1989). Policy research: Concepts, methods, and applications. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Schrag, J. A. (1993). Restructuring schools for better alignment of general and special education. In J. I. Goodlad, & T. C. Lovitt (Eds.), Integrating general and special education (203-228). New York: Macmillan.

Skrtic, T. M. (1991a). The special education paradox: Equity as the way to excellence. Harvard Educational Review, 61(2), 148-206.

Skrtic, T. M. (1991b). Behind special education: A critical analysis of professional culture and school organization. Denver, CO: Love Publishing.

Skrtic, T. M. (1995). The organizational context of special education and school reform. In E. L. Meyen, & T. M. Skrtic (Eds.), Special education and student disability: An introduction traditional, emerging and alternative perspectives (pp. 729-792). Denver CO: Love Publishing Company.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). The ethnographic interview. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

Stainback, S., & Stainback, W. (1990a). Facilitating support networks. In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), Support networks for inclusive schooling: Independent integrated education (pp. 25-36). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

Stainback, S., & Stainback, W. (1990b). Inclusive schooling. In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), Support networks for inclusive schooling: Independent integrated education (pp. 3-23). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

Stainback, S. & Stainback, W. (Eds.). (1992). Curriculum considerations in inclusive classrooms: Facilitating learning for all students. Baltimore: Brookes.

Stainback, W., & Stainback, S (1990c). Support facilitators that work. In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), Support networks for inclusive schooling: Independent integrated education (pp. 37-48). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

Stainback, W. & Stainback, S. (Eds.). (1990). Support networks for inclusive schooling: Interdependent integrated education. Baltimore: Brookes.

Stainback, W., & Stainback, S. (1996). Rationale for inclusive schooling. In S. Stainback & W. Stainback (Eds.), Inclusion: A guide for educators (pp. 3-15). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

Taylor, D. L. & Bogotch, I. E. (1994). School-level effects of teachers' participation in decision making. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 16(3) 302-319.

Taylor, D. L. & Teddlie, C. (1992). Restructuring and the classroom: A view from a reform district. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

U.S. Department of Education. (1995). To assure the free appropriate public education of all children with disabilities. Seventeenth Annual Report to the Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Villa, R., & Thousand, J. S. (1990). Administrative supports to promote inclusive schooling. In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), Support networks for inclusive schooling: Independent integrated education (pp. 151-166). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

Weiss, C. (1992). Shared decision making about what? A comparison of schools with and without teacher participation. A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association.

West Virginia Department of Education. (1994). A strategic planning guide for West Virginia Faculty Senates. Charleston, WV: Author.

West Virginia Department of Education. (1997). Exceptional students in West Virginia's county school districts: Selected enrollment and financial information. Charleston, WV: Author.

Wohlsetter, P., Smyer, R., & Mohrman, S. A. (1994). New boundaries for school-based management: The high involvement model. Educational Evaluation, 16(3), 268-286.

Yin, R. K. (1984). Case study research: Design and methods. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

At
Risk

Suzanne Lamorey
Nancy Perry
Division of Curriculum & Instruction
College of Education
POB 871011
Tempe, AZ 85287-1011
Arizona State University

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES EDUCATION: RURAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESOURCES

In 1995, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development concluded that "By age 17, about a quarter of all adolescents have engaged in behaviors that are harmful or dangerous to themselves or others: getting pregnant, using drugs, taking part in antisocial activity, and failing at school. Nearly half of American adolescents are at high or moderate risk of seriously damaging their life chances." (Carnegie, 1995). As the availability of drugs and guns grows easier, as families are broken and reblended, as the majority of school children grapple with unsupervised latchkey experiences, and as supportive resources become more scarce, there seem to be more icebergs and fewer life boats for even the most able and advantaged students. What happens to the students with disabilities?

As the inclusion movement continues to integrate students with disabilities into communities, these students are placed more often into a variety of vulnerable situations in which they may be exploited and manipulated. Youth with disabilities are struggling with topics such as teenage pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, child abuse, rape, drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, gang activity and delinquency, racism, abortion, domestic violence, and tobacco use. These youths are particularly susceptible to dangerous outcomes associated with these contemporary issues. Given the enormous numbers of special education students in mainstreamed settings and the costs of the social, legal, medical, and personal outcomes of their victimization, the question of risk reduction is of vital importance. How can the risks associated with contemporary issues be reduced for students with disabilities?

In this paper, we will explore the education of students with disabilities in terms of these contemporary issues. We will focus on:

(1) A summary of some of the efforts and experiences reported by rural and urban classroom teachers in addressing these risks and issues, and
(2) An overview of the development of web-based supports that can facilitate teacher, parent, and community efforts (particularly in rural areas) to address contemporary issues education in the future.

The extent to which public schools provide risk reduction for students through prevention and protection programs varies across communities. Research indicates that even when schools do provide risk-reduction programs, many students in special education are excluded. For example, several studies that describe the substance abuse epidemic point out that students with disabilities are frequently excluded from available drug abuse prevention programs. A National School Boards Association study reported similar findings in the area of HIV-prevention education. This study indicated that fewer than 25% of students with autism received HIV-prevention education and fewer than 50% of students with emotional disturbance or mental retardation received such instruction (National School Boards Association, 1990). Significant numbers of students with disabilities are excluded from discussions of extremely important controversial issues in the classroom.

In spite of how parents, teachers, or administrators may personally feel about topics such as teen sex, abortion, gangs, child abuse, suicide, or drugs, special education students are struggling to contend with these issues often without the necessary information and support. To investigate the role of special education teachers in this area, we (Lamorey & Leigh, 1996; Leigh & Lamorey, 1996; Leigh, Huntze, & Lamorey, 1995) explored the extent to which special education teachers addressed various contemporary issues with a variety of special education students.

Through the use of a survey instrument, we gathered information regarding the extent to which 45 contemporary issues were addressed by special education and general education teachers across Missouri and

Arizona. The purpose of the survey was descriptive in nature, that is, to investigate the extent to which teachers address a range of contemporary issues and to elicit teacher comments regarding obstacles and needs relative to contemporary issues education. Development of the survey is discussed in more detail by Leigh, Huntze, and Lamorey (1995).

In completing the survey, teachers of students with learning disabilities, teachers of students with mental retardation, and teachers of students with behavioral disorders were asked to rate each item on a scale according to the extent to which they addressed the topics with their students. For example, a rating of 1 indicated that the teacher did not address the topic with a majority of students, a rating of 2 indicated that the teacher addressed the topic to a very limited extent, a rating of 3 indicated that the topic was addressed to some extent, and a rating of 4 indicated that the teacher addressed the topic fully and completely.

The results of the survey were rich in content as teachers took a considerable amount of time to include written responses regarding their roles, responsibilities, and perceptions of needs in contemporary issues education. It was evident that most special education teachers did not address these topics to much extent. On average, even the topics with the highest ratings were addressed only "to some extent" (a rating of 3 on the scale). The most commonly addressed topics were "attitudes towards disabilities", "tobacco use", "drug use" and "moral and ethical values". In fact, more than half of the topics received item mean ratings of less than 2.0 from teachers of students with LD as well as from teachers in the MR area meaning that in general they were covered in a very limited manner. It was also evident in teachers' narrative responses that they had very strong feelings about the restrictions they experienced in addressing student needs relative to these issues. Teachers reported feeling constrained by time, lack of materials and resources, lack of support from administrators, and a sense that there was little community support for providing information about these sensitive issues.

In light of the information and insights gleaned from the first survey study, a second study was conducted to learn more about the needs of teachers and their communities as well as to learn about the obstacles, resources, and successes that were significant for teachers of students with special needs. The original survey was expanded to include questions about (1) teacher's perceptions of the locus of responsibility relative to the parents' role versus the school's role in discussing these topics with students, (2) teacher needs in curriculum development relative to contemporary topics, (3) teacher resources relative to these topics, and (4) teacher willingness to address these topics with their students. Copies of this survey were mailed to principals of over 150 high schools in Arizona with instructions to distribute the surveys to teachers of students with LD, with BED, with MR, and teachers of typical learners. Responses were received from 102 Arizona teachers. Arizona respondents included 39 teachers of students with LD, 20 teachers of students with MR, 10 teachers of students with BED, 11 teachers of cross-categorical classrooms, and 22 teachers of typical learners.

The first analysis of the Arizona data focused on the differences between rural special educators, urban special educators, and urban general educators. For this analysis, 19 of the most high risk categories were chosen for comparisons, and the percentage of responses for ratings of 3 and 4 were combined to determine an indicator of the extent to which each contemporary issue was addressed by the various groups of educators. Results according to the five most frequently addressed issues and the five least frequently addressed are indicated below and the expanded results are shown in Table 1. These items are organized according to the percentage of teacher-respondents who reported that they addressed these topics "at least to some extent."

Top Five Items Discussed By Teachers

Urban educators of typical students:	Urban educators of students w/disabilities	Rural educators of students w/disabilities
drug abuse (86%),	attitudes re disabilities (81%)	attitudes re disabilities (60%)
tobacco use (73%),	racism (57%)	tobacco use (60%)
racism (73%),	tobacco use (53%)	teen pregnancy (59%)
teen pregnancy (69%),	drug abuse (50%)	drug abuse (59%)
attitudes re disabilities (69%)	domestic violence (37%)	alcohol abuse (59%)

Five Items Least Discussed By Teachers

Urban educators of typical students:	Urban educators of students w/disabilities	Rural educators of students w/disabilities
homosexuality (10%)	abortion (4%)	homosexuality (15%)
abortion (27%)	homosexuality (9%)	rape (18%)
rape (32%)	rape (11%)	child abuse (sexual) (18%)
child abuse (sexual) (41%)	sexual promiscuity (15%)	abortion (18%)
sexual promiscuity (41%)	child abuse (sexual) (18%)	sexual promiscuity (27%)

In general, the urban educators of typical students addressed these high risk contemporary issues to a greater extent than did the special educators. Furthermore, in all but two categories, more of the rural special educators addressed the high risk issues than did the urban special educators. According to Table 1, in nine of the 19 high risk categories, 10% to 24% more rural special educators addressed high risk issues than did urban special educators.

It is interesting to note that the rural special educators were more often providing contemporary issues education to students as compared to urban educators as often the rural communities are portrayed as more conservative environments wherein families are considered self-sufficient. In the narratives provided by teachers, the rural teachers often noted that they felt bound by community standards and school board policy to avoid controversial issues at all costs. As teachers wrote: "In the district I work for most of these issues are considered the responsibility of the family and we are encouraged not to talk about them in class." "Our school has ruled on some of these topics and does not permit them." "I would be fired in a nanosecond if I touched any of these issues." Thirty-nine percent of the comments by rural educators concerning barriers to discussing contemporary issues focused on the obstacle of conservative community standards/school officials. Twenty-seven percent of the rural educators' comments regarding obstacles focused on the lack of time and 14% of the rural educators' comments reflected teacher concerns about the students' ability levels relative to the perceived complexity of some of the high risk issues.

Urban special educators did not address these contemporary issues as frequently as their rural counterparts. Obstacles noted by urban educators included lack of time (24%), lack of materials (19%), community standards/officials (15%) and parental resistance (12%). The lack of materials was significant for the urban educators, but negligible for the rural educators. Very few educators from either rural or urban settings indicated that a lack of training prohibited them from addressing contemporary issues.

Changes that urban educators felt would facilitate their involvement in teaching contemporary issues included more and better materials (51%), a district requirement that the material be taught (8%), and better leadership (6%). Rural educators indicated that the following changes would enhance their ability to teach contemporary issues: district guidelines/permission (25%), appropriate materials (22%), a coalition of community agencies involved in teaching these issues (15%), and more freedom (6%).

If it is to occur meaningfully, contemporary issues education must involve a shared commitment among educators, parents, and others in the community. Generally, teachers reported that they were willing and able to provide contemporary issues education for students with disabilities if they had the support, time, guidelines, and materials to do the job. One of the major outcomes of these survey studies is the on-going development of a very new web-based resource for teachers, parents, and communities to use in addressing contemporary issues education. Resources have been collected from a diverse variety of information sources and will be available for schools to begin to develop meaningful materials which can be adapted for a variety of settings, a variety of student learning styles, and which can be used in modular form for a variety of district requirements. This site will be available for teachers to share materials that are available at developmentally appropriate ages using a variety of teaching styles and strategies. Parents as well as other community members will be able to refer to the materials, and to collaborate with schools in making selections that reflect community-values. Updates can be provided to keep materials current. Names and locations of community-based, regional, and national agencies and groups will be available. Media resources can be listed and described. The development and description of this site will be the focus of the presentation, and input from conference attendees is excitedly anticipated.

References

Lamorey, S., & Leigh, J. (1996). Contemporary issues education: Teacher perspectives of the needs of students with disabilities. Remedial and Special Education, 17, 119-127.

Leigh, J., & Lamorey, S. (1996). Contemporary issues education: Beond traditional special education curricula. Intervention in School and Clinic, 32(1), 26-33.

Leigh, J., Huntze, S., & Lamorey, S. (1995). Contemporary issues education: Teaching controversial subjects to students with learning disabilities. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 28, 353-363.

National School Boards Association, HIV and AIDS Education Project (1990). Reducing the risks: A school leader's guide to AIDS education. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Table 1. High Risk Items Ranked By Teacher Categories

Q# 3 Tobacco Use

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	6	33	36	24
Disabled Urban	15	33	33	20
Typical Urban	0	27	23	50

Q# 4 Racism

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	18	30	36	15
Disabled Urban	15	28	37	20
Typical Urban	5	18	64	14

Q# 9 Homosexuality

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	55	30	15	0
Disabled Urban	50	41	9	0
Typical Urban	68	23	5	5

Q# 14 Domestic Violence

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	19	43	25	13
Disabled Urban	33	30	28	9
Typical Urban	18	27	32	23

Q# 18 Suicide

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	38	28	31	3
Disabled Urban	35	46	13	7
Typical Urban	18	27	27	27

Q# 19 AIDS/HIV

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	27	33	21	18
Disabled Urban	26	44	20	11
Typical Urban	14	32	27	27

Q# 23 Teenage Pregnancy

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	27	12	27	32
Disabled Urban	24	41	26	9
Typical Urban	9	23	23	46

Q# 27 Divorce

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	41	28	16	16
Disabled Urban	33	48	15	4
Typical Urban	23	27	27	23

Q#28 Attitudes toward people with disabilities

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	12	27	33	27
Disabled Urban	4	15	37	44
Typical Urban	5	27	23	46

Q# 30 Gang activity

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	24	36	30	9
Disabled Urban	20	50	22	9
Typical Urban	14	23	27	36

Table 1. High Risk Items Ranked By Teacher Categories (continued)

Q# 31 Safe sex

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	30	33	24	12
Disabled Urban	37	44	13	7
Typical Urban	32	17	17	41

Q#32 Alcohol abuse

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	12	27	32	27
Disabled Urban	11	44	32	11
Typical Urban	9	23	18	50

Q#34 General sex education

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	34	31	16	19
Disabled Urban	47	29	18	7
Typical Urban	27	23	23	27

Q# 35 Drug use

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	18	18	24	35
Disabled Urban	17	33	35	15
Typical Urban	0	14	36	50

Q# 36 Sexual promiscuity

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	33	39	18	9
Disabled Urban	41	44	11	4
Typical Urban	18	41	18	23

Q#38 Rape

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	49	33	15	3
Disabled Urban	44	46	11	0
Typical Urban	41	27	18	14

Q#41 Abortion

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	52	30	15	3
Disabled Urban	59	37	4	0
Typical Urban	59	14	27	0

Q#42 Child abuse in the form of physical violence

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	24	41	24	9
Disabled Urban	28	44	24	4
Typical Urban	14	36	23	27

Q#43 Child abuse in the form of sexual behavior including incest

	% of #1 responses	% of #2 responses	% of #3 responses	% of #4 responses
Disabled Rural	38	44	12	6
Disabled Urban	42	40	11	7
Typical Urban	27	32	18	23

Pamela S. Flood
Betsy Enright
Center for Community Inclusion
5717 Corbett Hall
University of Maine
Orono, ME 04469 – 5717

INSIGHTS INTO CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR: POSITIVE SUPPORTS A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH

What are Positive Supports?

Positive supports are actions and beliefs that embody interpersonal relationships, choice, communication, inclusive communities, and self-determination designed to assist a person to become a more interdependent and contributing member of the community. These supports encompass a variety of strategies (that are considered unconditionally) for a person who may be exhibiting behaviors that challenge family members, educational staff, service providers, and/or the community. A committed group of divers people collaborate to identify, develop, and secure the needed supports, while acknowledging a person's individuality. Positive supports recognize all people's rights to make informed choices, take risks, and participate in the decision-making process.

The core elements of positive supports include:

- Active participation in an inclusive community,
- Person-centered planning,
- Communication,
- Choice,
- Friendship
- Collaborative teams,
- Control,
- Support during a crisis, and
- Teaching and building competencies

Center for Community Inclusion, University of Maine 2000

Management vs. Guidance: Creating Climates and Cultures of Learning for All

The schools we are restructuring for high academic standards for all are highly complex social entities where the culture or climate of the school is a powerful factor in determining goals and objectives for enhanced learning. With the increase in student behavior problems and random acts of violence, more cries are being heard to return to the "old days" where students were expelled or severely punished. Some people believe schools have softened in their ability to hold students accountable. To what degree can we hold our children accountable for behaviors arising from school environments? Is it possible to look at the behavior of our children as isolated and separate from the climate and culture of our schools and communities? This article will explore some of these issues.

In a recent survey completed by close to 3000 students grades 6-12 in Maine, only 32% felt that their school provided a caring, encouraging environment; and only 22% felt that the adults in the community as a whole value youth (Asset Builders Report, 1999). Should we look deeper into the messages our students are sharing? The culture in many of our schools is based on what we have coined as a *Power Over* philosophy. This philosophy is rooted in a belief that school authorities have the power to make students behave in certain ways and to fit the mold of adult expectations and needs. The concept of increasingly stringent consequences fits quite naturally in a system that is still largely a political structure based upon a top-down/scientific management philosophy. The term *Zero Tolerance* —also being touted as a solution—fits neatly when thinking in terms of a system of education that has power over individuals. When considering such a management style, a system where Zero Tolerance is the norm and individual freedom is its least concern comes to mind. This system, of course, is our prison system. Prisons are considered one of the most dangerous environments in which to work, live, or much less learn. Is a Zero Tolerance policy one that will nurture student decision making, encourage the stretching of minds, and elevate learning to higher standards?

Let's, for a moment, envision the school cultures that value and respect all members of the school community. Envision a system that guides, empowers, engages, and encourages all individuals in their own learning and behavior choices, where students develop and make choices based upon the fact that it is the right thing to do for themselves and others, rather than being fearful of the consequences, and where our school climates promote the engagement of all learners to recognize not only their own potential and value, but the potential and value of all of their peers.

In many schools, educators are moving in this direction, utilizing initiatives such as site-based management, developmentally appropriate educational practices, multiple intelligence practices, portfolio development, alternate assessment, middle level education, and constructivism. These initiatives are characterized by their active involvement of students in their own learning. Such initiatives, however, cannot be limited to our classroom practice. Otherwise, students are getting a mixed message. What must students think if, in the classroom, we respect their judgement, intellect, and decision-making ability, but in the broader school community they are "managed?" Our school practices need to be deeply rooted and aligned with our beliefs about how we treat our students in the school and in the larger community as well.

The 14 Learner-Centered Psychological Principles (The American Psychological Association, 1995) articulate the importance of climates that support, care and respect all of our students. These principles are meant to apply to all learners: children, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members involved in our educational system. We believe educators must keep these principles in mind as our schools are restructured not only for high standards, but also for climates and cultures that are safe places for our students to learn and grow. Four of these principles are quoted below:

# 7 Motivational and emotional influences on learning. Motivation is influenced by the individual's emotional states, beliefs, interests and goals and habits of thinking. Intense negative emotions (e.g. anxiety, panic, rage, insecurity) and related thoughts (e.g. worrying about competence, ruminating about failure, fearing punishment, ridicule or stigmatizing label) detract from motivation, interfere with learning and contribute to low performance.

# 8 Intrinsic motivation to learn. Intrinsic motivation is stimulated by tasks of optimal novelty and difficulty, relevant to personal interests, and providing for personal choice and control.

#11 Social influences on learning. Learning is influenced by social interactions, interpersonal relations and communication with others. Quality personal relationships that provide stability, trust, and caring can increase learners' sense of belonging, self-respect and self acceptance, and provide a positive climate of learning. Positive learning climates can also help to establish the context for healthier levels of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Such contexts help learners feel safe to share ideas and actively participate in the learning.

#13 Learning and diversity. Learning is most effective when differences in learners' linguistic, cultural and social background are taken into account. When learners perceive that their individual differences in abilities, backgrounds, cultures, and experiences are valued, respected and accommodated in learning tasks and contexts, levels of motivation and achievement are enhanced.

We need to take action, not through methods of management and Zero Tolerance, but through utilization of methods where building relationships, trust, and communication will assist our schools in moving away from management of students. A school system rooted in a guidance philosophy recognizes the need to empower all individuals in the system. It requires our restructuring to be characterized by the challenge of setting high standards for behavior and academics through a climate of respect and responsibility for all individuals in the school. Such a system operates from the understanding that when all students' ideas, thoughts, and power are honored, a new level of engagement with their educational process is possible. This philosophy is grounded in the belief that all individuals have a desire to succeed and belong to the community, and it is the school and greater community's responsibility to create the opportunities for this to happen.

A real challenge facing educators today is figuring out what we can do to support all individuals in coming to understand themselves as learners and as important members of the school community. We will be required to support this new understanding of self by honoring each student as an individual with unique gifts and talents rather than by honoring each on his/her ability to assimilate. It will require active engagement with students in the restructuring process so we can participate in learning with and from students.

The guidance philosophy has efficacy for all students, including those with challenging behaviors, academic lethargy, or system withdrawal: This shift will take time and introspection. It will require that educators model actions for all students, affirming for them that they are in a system that supports their growth, where their voices and concerns are heard in ways that honor them as a whole person. Modeling these actions will create an environment that affords students the power to achieve their goals, through empowerment, sharing, and mutual regard. Our roles in working with students become those of facilitator, advisor, and mentor, as well as educator. The power that our actions and words have in giving or taking away an individual's power will be recognized.

It has been increasingly recognized how important it is to engage students in solving the problems facing our schools and communities. When optimal learning opportunities are compromised for some they are compromised for all. Questions to guide inquiry can include: Do the actions of our environment support enhancing every student's self respect? Have our practices taken power away from some by excluding individuals and making some students feel less important than others? We are reminded by Einstein's statement that we need to move to a new consciousness: "No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. We must see the world anew." (as cited in Wheatley, 1994, p. 5).

Most of the time student behaviors are rooted in a feeling of insecurity, a feeling of unimportance, a lack of belonging, or a lack of acknowledgment. Working with students to create responsive support systems can be an incredibly valuable experience for students and educators. A key ingredient to making this work is trust. Establishing both individual and school based teams to create a problem solving process of empowerment is like a well-nurtured garden. The fruition of the process can indeed lead to great changes for both individuals and the school community. Indeed, these are characteristics of our best schools.

Key concepts of a guidance philosophy keep the student at the center of the process and build communication, trust, and respect. Students are asked for their ideas, their feelings about their environment, and what they need from us to help them reach their greatest dreams. When students are floundering, withdrawing, or exhibiting behavior that is interfering with their ability to succeed, engage them. Really listen to what they have to say. Often, their needs are simple and straight forward. Sometimes they just need your ear. Look carefully at the school environment. Is it truly a safe place for all students? Remember, if one student feels unsafe and unaccepted all students will be impacted. We encourage you to read Alfie Kohn's book, *Punished by Rewards* (1993), which provides a great place to start exploring current practices that maybe inhibiting growth and access by all students.

Revisiting our school structures and interactions with students is imperative if we are to create and support learning environments that optimally prepare all youth for the future. Our schools must send forth students who are powerful, students who understand their learning process, and who know how to tackle problems. We must send forth students who have a better sense of who they are as humans and their responsibility to others. Indeed, can there be a more important way to devote our energy?

References

American Psychological Association (1997, November). *Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: A Framework for School Redesign and Reform* [On-line] Available Internet: apa.org/ed/lcp.html

Kohn, Alfie (1993). *Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Portland Asset Builders (1999). *Asset Builders Report* (Available from the Portland Asset Builders, c/o United Way of Greater Portland, PO Box 15200, Portland, ME 04112-5200)

Wheatley, Margaret (1992). *Leadership and the New Science: Learning about Organization from an Orderly Universe*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Ryan Hungerford
Anderson School District One
Furman University
PO Box 99
Williamston, SC 29697

Geneal Cantrell
Furman University
Anderson School District One
3300 Poinsett Hwy
Greenville, SC 29613-0600

Megan Keyes
Hunt Meadows Elementary School

Colin Rork
Hunt Meadows Elementary School

Michelle Vogel
Hunt Meadows Elementary School

TEACHER-TO-TEACHER SHARE SQUARE: PUTTING THE QUILT TOGETHER-REFLECTIONS OF FIRST YEAR TEACHERS

Long hours, difficult parents, challenging students, feelings of being overwhelmed, confusion, and a lack of support…these are just a few of the complaints of many first year teachers. Often teachers enter the field with insufficient training, little experience, and a lack of self-confidence. University education professors must acknowledge the critical needs of first year teachers. Among those are a desire to bridge the gap that exists between teacher preparation programs and teacher readiness to meet the challenges of the diverse population of students in rural classroom settings. First year teachers need continual support to increase the success rate of their first year. Out of this need, a vision was born; and today, this vision is a reality.

Introduction

The education department from a liberal arts university in collaboration with a rural school district in the Southeastern United States began dreaming and constructing an innovative extended teacher preparation program. This vision for future educators was to not only better prepare them for the transition from the university into the classroom setting but also to continue the support throughout their first year of teaching. The vision was to create a block of interrelated courses that would result in the college seniors participating in an interlaced curriculum in their final term of their senior year. The model, titled Teacher-to-Teacher was created with the hopes of producing a more competent and confident teacher. In re-thinking the process university professors intuitively invited the seniors to become co-creators of this collaborative learning experience. Part of the vision of this program was that all stakeholders become empowered and valued for their suggestions in the design and creation of this program.

Evolution of a Collaborative Community

With the stage set, a team of professors, ten senior students, a teacher-in-residence, the liberal arts university, and the rural school district embarked on this journey together. Quickly a community was established among this group of educators who all shared the same vision. The community was only strengthened as the dedicated educators researched, planned, and worked to create a network where all members were respected and valued for their opinions. The seniors began taking new university courses in assessment, technology, curriculum integration, classroom management and diversity. These courses were referred to as the Senior Block. These classes were not the traditional, lecture style but rather presented in an interactive workshop-style setting. The classes were all integrated and the professors worked closely to organize projects and papers that addressed objectives in all courses. For example, an electronic portfolio was a major project assigned for the technology class. However, in the portfolio, evidence of classroom management and assessment had to be documented. The collaborative teaching style made it possible to cover a plethora of material and still have a hands-on learning experience.

Understanding Research

The vision was to create a smooth transition for the first year teacher from university life to a rural classroom environment. Research on the background of the school district began by collecting data on the socio-economic status of the community, oral histories of teachers, administrators, and life-long community members. This information was necessary to understand the social culture the seniors were about to enter. With guidance of Senior Block professors and a qualitative researcher, a 15-question protocol was created to interview these life-long community members. In addition, various school personnel, parents, guidance counselors, and students were interviewed. Each pre-service teacher also interviewed the students in his/her classroom to find their interests, needs, and learning styles. To assist in the gathering of this data, each pre-service teacher was given a micro-cassette recorder to tape the conversations. This was necessary to help capture the comprehensive cultures of the rural school district. Among other data, the pre-service teachers examined school renewal plans to find both the ethnic and gender make-up of the school along with the number of students receiving free and reduced lunch.

Doing Research

To further understand the complex cultural organization of a rural school setting, the seniors participated in a poverty tour and a diversity workshop. The oral history research coupled with the poverty tour and diversity workshop, presented a thick description of the rural community where the project was taking place. This enlightenment of the pre-service teachers, with regard to the rural community and its culture, only enhanced their effectiveness and acceptance into the school environment and helped ground themselves in the unique community in which the school is a central component.

As with traditional teacher education programs, pre-service teachers were given a classroom to student teach during their final part of the senior block. Understanding the importance of school culture and organization, the goal was to place each pre-service teacher with a student teaching placement that would remain the same as their first year of teaching. In the fall, seven of the 10 seniors were able to stay in the same school. The remaining three seniors moved to a new school building that was under construction during their student teaching.

Bridging Two Communities

The community that was established between the seniors, the school district, the university professors, the master teacher, and the teacher-in-residence was a crucial component to the success of the immersion of the seniors into their new settings. The teacher-in-residence provided the link between the school district and the university. She previously taught in the school district for 21 years and now was providing the connection that was needed for effective communication between the participating school district and university. Three master teachers were chosen to participate in the Teacher-to-Teacher program. Each master teacher had also been teaching an average of twenty years for the school district. A unique feature of this program was that the master teachers be released of all teaching responsibilities. Each served as a mentor to three or four of the induction teachers. The master teacher performed a wide variety of duties including helping the induction teacher with lesson plans, parent communication, discipline, teaching skills, teacher-principal relations, and teacher-university relations. The master teacher provided a crucial support system for the induction teacher. She was the one who was most available for support and was directly involved in the classroom. She observed, provided input on issues that need to be addressed in the classroom yet, she also encouraged and often embraced the role of cheerleader to spur the teachers on during the challenging and stressful times of year. The master teacher was also the connection between the induction teachers and other teachers at each school. She provided a comfortable setting that helped to facilitate an inviting community atmosphere within the rural school community.

Evolution of a School/Classroom Community

Three university graduates that are a part of the Teacher-to-Teacher program are currently teaching at Oak Meadows Elementary. Oak Meadows Elementary is a rural school located in the Southeastern United States. Approximately 500 students attend the elementary school and 24 % participated in the free or reduced lunch program. The year 2000 was the first year of Oak Meadows existence. Oak Meadows houses students from a combination of three other schools that were overflowing in the district. With students coming from a variety of different schools and learning backgrounds the researchers/teachers found an immediate need to begin establishing a community at Oak Meadows Elementary. A non-threatening community environment needed to first be established in the classroom and then throughout the entire school. This community environment was needed to provide a safe and enjoyable place for students emotionally and academically.

As first year teachers at Oak Meadows Elementary, the researchers/teachers have found tremendous support and encouragement through the Teacher-to-Teacher program. Having a support system of professors, a teacher-in-residence, and a master teacher has been essential to the growth of the first year teachers. Each person was able to look at the researchers'/teachers' classrooms through a different lens to help strengthen that classroom teacher and the classroom environment. Three researchers/teachers from the Teacher-to-Teacher program are housed at Oak Meadows. Lon teaches third grade, Milly teaches second grade, and Melissa teaches first grade. Following are two vignettes that further explain the rural community environment and the inclusion of special needs students in the classroom. These vignettes guided by Dewey's principles detail a holistic representation of the students by the teachers in dealing with the social, emotional, and physical needs of their students. First, Lon explains how he established a community environment in his classroom to help promote self-esteem and encouragement among his students. Second, Melissa explains how she used a community environment to provide inclusion of special needs children in her classroom.

Vignette of a Teacher Building Classroom Community

Lon, a third grade teacher, reflects on the foundation of his journey to becoming a teacher. In his third grade class he has 19 special needs students. These include ADHD, ADD, LD, and one child with an anxiety disorder. He says of his class,

> …when I arrived at college, becoming a teacher wasn't something I thought about. It wasn't until my original major fell through that I decided to take an education course. As part of the course, I had the opportunity to tutor a struggling young boy who seemed to be misunderstood. It was an invaluable experience for me because I came away from it motivated to reach out to children, make them feel special, and impact their lives.

Lon's journey in using intuitiveness begins. He develops the characteristics of being a connected teacher. Lon wants his students to have that same kind of connection. Lon continues,

> I began to see how much I really loved being around children, especially the little ones. Fittingly, my student teaching placement was in a primary school…Here I was, thinking how much I loved these little guys and how excited I was just to be around them. I decided to do everything in my power to show those second graders how much I cared about them and just how special they really were. I planned and taught an integrated unit on self-esteem. I really strived to shower the students with love and praise as they gained confidence in themselves. As I came away from student teaching, I was more than eager to create my own classroom. I felt prepared and educated as a teacher, equipped with the right tools, and ready to impact live I knew the secret to becoming the teacher I wanted to…compassion.

Lon reflected on a genuine relationship between student and teacher. He believes that he can develop an insightful and trustful relationship between himself and the students in the class. Lon reflects,

> Self-esteem has always been a concern of mine ever since I learned about the self-fulfilling prophecy. As soon as I made the choice to become a teacher, I made a mental note that one of the main focuses in my classroom was going to be self-esteem. I vowed that each child in my classroom was going to know, above all else, that they were important and that I loved them. I took this very seriously and knew that my plan would only work if I truly believed it. So, as I was mulling over the classroom atmosphere, procedures, and even intangibles, I came up with the idea for *Share Square*. I wanted to create a place for the children to feel comfortable sharing things about themselves."

Lon's insightfulness into the understanding of the student guides him into creating the idea of *Share Square*. He builds on student confidence and compassion to establish classroom community. He talks on about *Share Square*,

> The idea behind *Share Square* was that [it] involved the personal lives of the students. I wanted to let the students know that the most important thing in our classroom was *them* [emphasis added]. *Share Square* was designed to be a time for the children to tell stories, jokes, or things that were on their mind. By talking about personal experiences, the children gain confidence in their personal lives while allowing the rest of us

> to learn more about them. Starting each day like this helps create a very inviting, personal, and emotionally safe classroom community.

For Lon, the students' opinions matter. This allows the opportunity to empower each individual. He believes each student is special. Lon wants his students to see and internalize their unique qualities. He continues,

> *Share Square* usually lasts about fifteen minutes and I remind students that keeping their story short and sweet will allow everyone a chance to share. I don't cut anybody off because that would defeat the purpose of the *Share Square*…I take an active interest in what everyone has to say…. thinking about a positive comment to add to the end of each story because a little reassurance goes a long way. Also, the children will sometimes ask me a question during *Share Square* providing many laughs, but it has also produced a few tears. It has definitely become an emotional safe haven for everyone, including me. The best part about *Share Square* is that its very presence now permeates the classroom aura.

Lon thinks that *Share Square* is a good start for community building. Additionally, he wants to give each child a distinct opportunity to be singled out, specially treated, and celebrated. Adapted from something similar he participated in while a third grade student, he decided to have a Star Student of the week. He shares,

> The Star Student has many privileges throughout "their week." During silent reading the Star may sit in the 'Star Chair"…is also the line leader in the hallway, has the choice of sitting next to me at lunch, picks out the music that we listen to every morning before announcements…On Monday, I interview the Star Student in front of the class, filling out a chart to be displayed for all to see. There is also a Star Table on which the Star Student displays pictures, toys, or objects [for others] others to see. After the interview the Star tells the class all about the things they have put on display. On Friday, before I pick the new Star Student, I ask the current Star to come in front of the room…a round of applause [is given].

Lon's first goal is to make sure his students felt loved and confident. He wants his students to feel safe. Lon continues to reflect on how he created a safe environment for his students. He is aware that it takes time to teach children to take responsibility for their own behavior.

Vignette of a Teacher Creating Inclusion of Special Needs Students

Melissa is a first grade teacher from Boston, Massachusetts. Approximately half of her 23 students display a variety of special needs. These needs include problems in speech/language, learning disabilities, and emotional disorders. Melissa will specifically focus on one of her students, Rose. Rose has been identified as at-risk due to external factors such as: socio economics, parental drug and alcohol abuse, neglect, and spousal abuse. Melissa goes on to discuss Rose in more detail,

> Rose doesn't have any type of [official] learning disability, but struggles in school because of many external factors. On the first day I could tell that Rose was very needy. My heart immediately went out to her. I learned quickly that my suspicions were correct. About a month into the school year, Rose and her two sisters were unexpectedly "dismissed early". We found out later that her mom had taken the girls to a safe-home in Ohio to escape apparent physical abuse in the home. The fact that one of my students lived this kind of life was a hard reality for me to face. It was even more difficult for me to realize that this situation was completely out of my control. For someone who wants to be able to "wipe the tears and put a band aid on every situation", this was a hard reality to deal with.

Melissa's compassion for her students goes well beyond the academic realm. She believes now that she must establish a relationship with each child before she can effectively teach. She continues,

> Without ever having the chance to say goodbye, I experienced such a great deal of regret. This experience made me really evaluate where my priorities as a teacher were a few months into my teaching experience. I realized then and still believe now that it is so easy to get caught up in the checklist of teaching and put more important things on the back burner. After Rose left, all of the well thought out lesson plans, hours of planning, and extra reading, didn't seem as important as having the chance to tell her one last time how much she meant to me, how much I loved and cared about her. It almost seems like it would be easier to never become emotionally involved in the first place, although I don't know how you could truly be a teacher and not be.

Melissa is establishing her priorities as a teacher. She has discovered that hers may come with a painful price. As a first year teacher, Melissa is seeing first hand the consequences on a child of neglect, drug use, and spousal abuse.

Her insight into the word of a special needs child gives her the opportunity to reconstruct her classroom to bring about inclusion for all her special needs classroom. She also faces the dilemma of being torn between doing what she intuitively knows is best for children and being trapped in the academic accountability arena.

Melissa continues,

> Fortunately, Rose returned about a month after the incident. I felt like I had been given a second chance to be a part of her life. Since then, I have tried to keep my focus and my priorities where I feel they need to be. Now more than ever, I see each day as another mission. Another chance to build up a child, lend an ear, a word of encouragement, a hug, a smile, or three important words- I love you. As much as I know that I feel this way, I never want to question if my kids understand how much I care. I am just thankful that this situation has opened my eyes to all that is involved in my role as a teacher.

Melissa realizes her tremendous potential to influence each child in her class. She views teaching as a "calling" rather than a profession. Melissa wishes that she could say that everything was fine when Rose returned, but that wasn't the case. She was terribly behind academically, which created another question of how to meet her demanding needs, along with 22 other students' needs as well. Melissa comments,

> One of my favorite quotes is "The students don't care what you know until they know that you care". This has proven to be so true in my classroom. I have made this a priority in my own teaching philosophy, and have seen the positive effect that it can have on students. Just like so many other things in life, I can see how the successful classroom is all about successful relationships. This is the kind of thing that I feel should be emphasized in the college prep classes, although I admit that much of this I have had to discover on my own.

Through her teaching experience Melissa has concluded that the most important aspects of teaching cannot be taught but must be discovered through experiences. This lens of social constructivism compliments Melissa's understanding of her thoughts on teaching. She shares her frustrations and concerns with her peers, school community, and university community,

> Sometimes I wonder if my heart could possibly get any bigger for my students. Just when I think it can't, I surprise myself and find some more room somewhere. It's these kind of thoughts that leave me sleepless at night, allowing me to question if I really have what it takes to endure this profession. Perhaps my main problem in life is not that I don't care, but at times I care too much. I guess in a sense my greatest strength, also seems to be my greatest weakness.

Melissa is questioning whether she is emotionally equipped to make the sacrifices necessary to reach and teach her students. She wonders if there will be anything left for her personal self. She struggles to maintain a balanced existence. Melissa reflects on her teaching experience,

> I want so badly to try and portray the depth of love that I hold for my first class of students. I knew that I wanted to be a teacher-not for the money, status, or amazing benefits, but for the mere fact that I wanted to make a difference in the life of a child. With this as a vision, I couldn't imagine a worthier profession that I would rather pursue. I may not be the popular college girl I once was, but I know now that I am more real than ever before.

Melissa realizes that these struggles are justified because she sees teaching as more than just a job; it is more than a career. Teaching is her calling. She continues,

> Life reminds me if a birthday partying many ways. We all come to the party with different gifts that we have been given to offer. Some may not even realize the potential of what lies inside the gift; others may never take the time to donate it. How sad to think of the many that miss out on both the giving and receiving of gifts. I know that I have been given the gift of teaching. Choosing to give it to others has blessed ME in return. Despite all that comes along with it, I know that I have been given the greatest job in the world. I teach, and I touch lives forever. What a gift.

Melissa believes that each child has a gift to share. This belief is reflected in her classroom community where all students feel special and are able to reach their potential.

The keystone and foundation of the extended teacher preparation program has been the community spirit among all stakeholders. Throughout Melissa's challenges and struggles, she turned to her co-creators [senior block professors, master teacher, teacher-in-residence] for needed support and guidance. An outcome of this community spirit is examined.

Melissa and her master teacher worked together to create an academic assistance plan for Rose. Together hey made numerous home visits to establish a relationship with the home and the school. Obvious economic needs became apparent as a result of these visits. Rose's needs were make known to the school agencies as is typical in these situations. However, through the sharing of Melissa's reflections with all stakeholders in the community, an unexpected outreach occurred. Rose and her siblings were provided with gifts to meet their basic needs. More importantly, not only were the physical and social economic needs meet, but the emotional connectedness was established between the larger community and this at-risk child. As a result of meeting these needs, her academic performance improved, her social interaction with her peers increased, and her family experienced their first positive relationship with an educational community.

Implications and Conclusions

Through this extended program a community was built that extended beyond the classroom that included first year teachers, professors, parents, master teachers, teacher-in-residence and more importantly the first year teachers' students. It is the researchers'/teachers' hope that the community environment established will last beyond the first year of the program. This program has modeled and perpetuated the idea of a community of life-long learners who long to share challenges and successes. Teacher-to-Teacher is a unique community that encourages educators to spend time together outside of the school environment collaborating and conversing to better meet the needs of novice teachers. It is a unique relationship that most teachers/researchers and schools desire yet; few actually attain. Through this experience, first year teachers will learn to continually reflect, share, and elaborate with various communities thus creating an empowered teacher who is better prepared to meet the challenges of today's diverse student population.

Karen J. Carney
Arizona State University
7675 E McDonald Dr #111
Scottsdale, AZ 85250

TREATING VIOLENCE EARLY: DO YOU KNOW A CHILD LIKE RAYMOND?

Will not be submitting a paper, as publication rights have been given as follows:

Carney, K.J. Mathur, S.M., & Rutherford, R.B. (in press). Redirecting Pathways to violence: Early identification of risk factors in children. *Reaching Today's Youth.*

Sharon Neyme
Utah SIGNAL Project
2290 East 450 South, #265
Salt Lake City, Utah 84117
Email:sharonne@utahsignal.org

Ronda Menlove
Utah State University
2865 Old Main Hill
Logan, Utah 84322-2865
email: rmenlove@cc.usu.edu

WHEN DOWNTOWN PROBLEMS COME DOWN HOME: PARTNERING TO HELP RURAL AT-RISK STUDENTS

Introduction

As big city problems move into rural settings, school administrators and teachers face increasingly complex situations and challenging student behaviors. Rural communities are being called upon to address many at-risk student issues that were previously isolated in the inner city. Issues such as disruptive student behavior, gang affiliation, violence, depression, poverty, substance abuse by students or their parents, absentee parents, and cultural diversity, among others, are forcing rural educators to rethink their roles and redefine their efforts. Discussions about at risk students often address such issues from an urban perspective. As rural at-risk student populations increase, rural educators are seeking additional information to assist them in dealing with the new challenges. It is more important then ever that rural educators know how to access assistance to provide them with information, skills, and training necessary to successfully address the needs of a changing population.

Characteristics of At-Risk Students

A review of the literature suggests that there is no single definition of an at-risk student. Slavin and Madden (1989) identify the main characteristics of at-risk students as low achievement, retention in grade, behavioral problems, poor attendance, low socio-economic status and attendance at schools with large numbers of poor students. Nash (1990) described the key characteristics as cultural differences, gender and family related issues. Mobility is often raised as a significant at-risk indicator (Bracey, 1989). The literature on assets identifies the presence of specific factors, or "assets," as helping to prevent at-risk behaviors in adolescents. This literature states that the presence of both "internal" and "external" assets, e.g. family support, positive school climate, parental discipline, involvement in music and/or school, community or church activities, decision-making skills, self-esteem, etc. can equip young people in making wise choices and avoiding risky behavior. It also states that an absence of assets, accompanied by the presence of "deficits" such as physical abuse, tv overexposure, excessive time home alone, negative peer pressure, parental addiction or social isolation increases the likelihood that a young person will engage in at-risk behaviors. These at-risk behaviors, characterized as the presence of alcohol, tobacco, anti-social behavior, depression/suicide, sexuality and illicit drugs, put the student "at-risk". Tharpe (1997) identifies three principal characteristics of the at-risk student as race, poverty, and cultural and linguistic diversity. To these he also adds the notion of geographic location. As rural demographics rapidly change, all of these characteristics increasingly apply to rural students.

Are Rural At-Risk Students Different?

Rural students face many of the same challenges as youth living in urban areas. There are, however, some unique characteristics of rural communities that may impact youth (Schroth & Fishbaugh, 2000). Poor rural areas do not usually experience the same levels of violence as inner cities, however, rural environments may become just as discouraging and hostile for students as inner cities (Rossi & Montgomery, 1994). Alcoholism, unemployment, illiteracy, welfare dependency, law-breaking, depression, and family violence are major problems in rural communities as well as urban areas (Auletta, 1982). In addition, there may also be limited government funding and resources available to assist students and families in coping with these difficult social problems. There may also exist a perception that the resources are not needed in rural communities (Petersen, Beekley, Speaker & Pietrzak, 1998; Stern, 1994). Recreational and educational opportunities for rural students may be limited due to lack of funding and smaller population bases.

A 1994 U. S. Department of Education report regarding the status of education in rural communities, cites the breakdown of religious, family, and school structures as a contributor to greater youth problems in rural areas. Rural school teachers and administrators affirm this finding by attributing increased student violence to a lack of family involvement in students' lives and decreased family stability (Peterson, et al., 1998). This breakdown of traditional rural community structures along with poverty and a lack of resources sets the stage for an increase in the number of students who are at risk.

At-Risk Student Issues of Most Concern To Administrators

A recent survey conducted by the Utah SIGNAL Project (*State Improvement Grant: Networks and Alliances for Learning*) at the Utah Rural Schools Conference in July, 2000, revealed significant concern by Utah rural educators for at-risk students. The survey also noted areas to be strengthened in state preservice administrator preparation programs, concerning the needs of at-risk students. Survey participants consisted of administrators currently working as building and district administrators in Utah public schools, k-12. Respondents were asked to rate their concern on a variety of issues related to at-risk students, including: special education law, instructional methodology for English Language Learners, state programs and funding sources to meet the needs of at-risk students, curriculum and assessment modifications and adaptations for diverse learners, the role and responsibilities of the instructional leader with regard to diverse learners, positive behavior interventions and supports for students with disabilities, and school-wide discipline models and programs. Significant numbers of respondents believed they had little or no knowledge in these key areas when they began their administrative careers.

Participants were also provided with a list of issues related to at-risk students and asked to identify which areas of professional development would be most useful to them, based on their current assignment. All of the issues generated considerable interest. The top area of concern, however, centered on the role/responsibilities of the instructional leader with regards to developing and implementing the IEP or Individualized Education Plan.

An additional survey conducted by the Utah SIGNAL Project at a workshop for new public school administrators in October, 2000 further verified these findings. In this survey, participants were asked to identify the five issues related to at-risk students that were of most concern to them as novice school administrators. Again, the most significant issue was academic achievement, which highlights the role of the administrator as the instructional leader for all students. Rounding out the top five concerns in this survey were: Drug/alcohol use, violence, absentee parents and depression.

The Utah SIGNAL Project seeks to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. When presented with the three main goals of the Utah SIGNAL Project, and asked about their perception of the importance of these at-risk student issues, the new administrators overwhelming expressed significant concern. Eighty-eight percent believed that "Developing and implementing individual education plans for students with disabilities" was an issue of "critical" or "very important" concern to them. When asked about "Working with general and special educators, and related services personnel to provide access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities," 94% of respondents indicated the issue to be "critical" or "very important." "Developing and implementing positive behavioral interventions for student with disabilities" was also listed as "critical" or "very important" by 94% of the respondents. Additional information concerning the results of these surveys may be obtained from the authors.

Preparing Administrators to Effectively Deal with At Risk Students

From these survey results, we see that issues of understanding and providing school leadership in the areas of programs to meet the needs of at-risk students is an area of considerable concern to public school administrators, and to new school administrators in particular. Rural school administrators see a need for additional training, knowledge and skills with regards to at-risk students as they begin their administrative careers. With this in mind, the authors developed a course now included in the Educational Leadership Administrator Preparation Program at Utah State University in which university professors collaborate with local and state agencies to train prospective administrators in rural and remote areas of Utah.

This course, "Educational Leadership for At-Risk Students," delivers administrative training via distance education to assist rural educators in dealing with at-risk student issues. It focuses on introducing educators working on their administrative certification to community, state and federal resources, and personnel with the expertise to assist them in addressing the critical needs of at-risk students. The course provides valuable information on forming partnerships with public health agencies, the various state Office of Education departments, practicing psychologists, and others in an effort to provide an approach to at-risk students that incorporates multiple perspectives. Course objectives include:

- Acquire leadership skills that facilitate leadership of programs for at-risk students
- Assume an instructional leadership role in developing programs to meet the needs of at-risk students
- Establish safe learning environments for all students-prevention and intervention
- Understand the unique needs of at-risk students
- Understand the policies and legal mandates for serving at-risk students
- Seek and obtain funding to serve at-risk students
- Support staff members who serve at-risk students
- Understand the broad array of services available for serving at-risk students
- Collaborate with other state and community agencies who serve at-risk students
- Work with parents of at-risk students
- Develop district and school climates and attitudes that facilitate the provision of services to at-risk students
- Interact positively and proactively with at-risk students

The course is based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, and is designed to help potential administrators rethink the concept of instructional leadership. ISLLC standards relevant to the course include;

Standard One: *A school administrator is an educational leaders who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.*

Standard Two: *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional programs conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.*

Standard Three: *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.*

Standard Four: *A school administrator is an education leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.*

Standard Five: *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.*

Standard Six: *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.*

Programs that Work

In a review of effective schooling and at risk students, Druland and Butler, (1987) found that the primary characteristic of successful programs for at-risk students appears to be a strong, intense level of commitment of the school staff working with the students. In the evaluation of programs, strong leadership of the building principal is one of the leading factors contributing most to the success of the program. Leadership development may be as important as program development or even more important (Druland & Butler, 1987). As the result of a ten-year study of successful schools, four essential characteristics were identified: a clear academic mission, an orderly environment, high academic engaged time on task, and frequent monitoring of student's profile (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). Barr and Parrett, 2000, synthesized the research regarding effective components of effective programs. They identified three broad categories as contributing to effective programs: a positive school climate, customized curriculum and instructional programs, and a focus on personal, social, and emotional growth. Specific programs and types of programs for all grade levels are listed by Barr and Parrett, 2000.

Authors of the Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools, 1998, suggest three intervention tactics for at-risk youth: teaching positive interaction skills, providing comprehensive services, and referring the child for special education evaluation. A follow up companion to the guide, Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide, 2000, describes specific interventions that can be used with youth who are at risk. Schoolwide and individual interventions are outlined. Positive behavior support systems are described along with information about how to establish safe school environments. Information is provided about developing school plans and setting up school teams and a listing of resources and websites.

Specific schoolwide reform programs have been identified as effective and replicable programs: Success for All, Roots and Wings, Accelerated Schools, School Development Program, and Consistent Management and Cooperative Discipline (CMCD). Organizations list program information on their websites: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/atrisk/at600.htm; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/1/topsyn1.html; National Association of School Psychologists, http://www.naspweb.org/pdf/BehInt2k.pdf; Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence, www.cal.org/crede/pubs/research/rr1.htm; Effective and Replicable Programs, http://www.successforall.net/resource/research/effective.htm; Prevention Strategies That Work: What Administrators Can Do To Promote Positive Student Behavior, www.air-dc.org/cecp/preventionstrategies/Default.htm.

Conclusions

It is evident from a review of the literature that rural communities are experiencing an increase in numbers of at-risk students and at-risk student behaviors. It is also evident from the surveys conducted by the Utah SIGNAL Project that a need exists for training rural school administrators to gain additional skills and knowledge to effectively deal with at-risk student issues. New administrators are particularly in need of information that will assist them in accessing community and state resources to address at-risk student issues. A university course, developed and taught by the authors, and taught by distance education in Utah and Wyoming helps address this need. This course could be replicated in other areas of the U.S. and tailored to meet the unique needs of rural communities in those areas.

References

Auletta, K. (1982). The underclass. New York: Vintage Books.

Barr, D.B. & Parrett, W.H. (2000). Hope fulfilled for at-risk and violent students: K-12 programs that work. (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Bracey, G.W. (1989). Moving around and dropping out. Phi Delta Kappan, 70(5), 407-410.

Druland, G., & Butler, J. A. (1987). Effective school practices and at-risk youth: What the research shows. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Nash, M.A. (1990). Improving your chances: A handbook for designing and implementing programs for at-risk youth. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Petersen, G.J., Beekley, C.Z., Speaker, K.M. & Pietrzak, D. (1998, Spring). An examination of violence in three rural school districts. Journal for Rural and Small Schools. 19(3), 25-38.

Rossi, R., & Montgomery, A. (Eds.). (1994). Education reform and students at risk: A review of the current state of the art. (U. S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.) Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Schroth, G., & Fishbaugh, M. S. (2000). Increasing caring and reducing violence in rural schools. Proceedings of the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) Annual Conference. Washington, DC.

Slavin, R. E. & Madden, N.A. (1989). What works for students at-risk: A research synthesis. Educational Leadership, 46(5), 4-20.

Stern, J. D. (1994). The condition of education in rural schools. (U. S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.) Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Teddlie, C. & Stringfield, S. (1993). Schools make a difference: Lessons learned from a ten-year study of school effects. New York: Teachers College Press.

Tharpe, R.G. (1997). From at-risk to excellence: Research, theory and principals for practice. Report 1. Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence.

U.S. Department of Education. (1998). Early warning, timely response: A guide to safe schools. Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. Department of Education. (2000). Safeguarding our children: An Action Guide. Washington, DC: Author.

Collaborative Education Models

Robert Steinmiller
Henderson State University

Georgine Steinmiller
Henderson State University

COLLEGE DEBATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This paper explores ideas, strategies and accommodations that allow access for students with disabilities to participate in college debate competitions. These competitions are in electronic media as well as live formats. This paper will explore actual case data in reference to experimentation and modifications actually done in the field with a visually disabled competitor. Implications for travel to competitions with students having disabilities should be of interest to the rural educator as well as the academic coach of such teams.

For background, one would benefit from looking at the area of interest. College debate has evolved into a variety of formats. Prepared and extemporaneous formats are currently popular. Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) format involves a case topic for the season that allows advance research and collection of data. National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA) and International Public Debate Association (IPDA) formats announce a choice of topics prior to the debate round, usually fifteen to thirty minutes of preparation time. In some formats, debaters work in pairs as a team (NPDA & CEDA) and in other formats as single debaters (IPDA and Lincoln-Douglas). With the extemporaneous debate formats debaters use their own intelligence and the briefing of one's debate partner (NPDA) or a briefing group including coach and in some cases an extemporaneous speaking resource box. All debate formats encourage a sense of fair play and ethical competition. This paper extents that openness of competition. An underlying assumption of on-going research is that access to populations with disabilities will allow persons not currently evident in the field access to the field.

The methodology used for this on-going research is to encourage interested persons with disabilities to prepare and participate. For the purposes of this current paper, the progress with experimentation has had two developments not yet recorded in the literature. First, a faculty development grant for research into what colleges and universities across the United States are experiencing in this area will facilitate further gathering of data. Future research should broaden the view regarding access and accommodations to persons with disabilities in competitive intercollegiate debate. Secondly, this paper explores the process of preparing, accommodating and modifying the accommodations in the field with actual face-to-face competition, which involved travel to an out-of-state university.

The results of this experience focus on a case analysis of the first trip with this student. The first observation was that the student needed to follow up on his initial contact with the debate coach. The student came of his own free will to pursue the possibility of learning more of debate to help him make his career and educational goals possible. He is a political science major with an interest in current affairs who wishes to go to law school and become a trial lawyer. After a series of interviews and support of our universities Office of Disabilities Services, the student had trust to enroll in debate practicum, which is the foundation of the competitive team.

The debate practicum taught the student the basics of debate and raised the student's confidence through impromptu, extemporaneous and persuasive speaking. Next the student worked on some in-class debate-case building and presenting. After some intramural rounds of debate a fellow student with the same amount of experience and interest evolved to become the student's partner. From this point on, in-class debate rounds of NPDA were conducted. The in-class competitions opened the door for this student to raise his interest and abilities. The next natural step for all students who have developed their skills on-campus is to want to compete off campus.

This is the new development in the process with this student. We prepared the student and his partner for out of state travel. A satisfying observation was how naturally the sighted student helped his partner. We talked about what accommodations would be ethical in competition. The NPDA format allows no outside resources or assistance to the pair after the topic is announced. We did not want to breach any ethics boundaries by giving the illusion that some outside resource was coming into the round, but we wanted a fair playing field for all participants to assure a proper competition.

We had decided earlier that Braille printers were too slow to be of use to the student to create an outline to flow in the round and during the round. The nature of the extemporaneous debate format was that the limited time frame of preparation to opening of the debate round barely let the debate partners discuss and structure their plan of attack without the additional time of a Braille printer system. What was decided was the sighted student recorded the outline and notes that the two debaters prepared. The students felt ready for the first round.

Modification became evident when the team first competed. The team did bring to the attention of the judge and competitors that the student with visual disabilities would be working from memory and not benefit from extra resources. This sense of fair play did not take into account the natural jitters and the focus of issues. Sighted debates can take notes and flow the outline of argumentation and support; the debater with visual disabilities could not. In the heat of competition and without an outline, points were dropped. The team decided the student would go second to support the case presented by his partner. The logic was that the greater burden is on the one who presents the case, and the second speaker could listen and respond.

After the first round, the team decided to adjust by having the debater with visual disabilities go first rather than second for the team. Rather than respond to the opponent's points and keeping track, the first speaker has control of the outline, especially in the affirmative case. This adjustment worked a bit better, but the need for an outline memory prompt in the heat of competition was still evident. The team asked the competitor and the judge if oral prompts by the partner would be allowed to refresh the speaker's memory in light of the fact that visual prompts were not possible. The ethics were that the accommodation was with the permission of the judge and opponents and that tag teaming where a partner advances the points for the speaker is not the purpose of outcome of the accommodation. This worked for the rest of the tournament.

After the tournament, the team and the coach went over the rounds and the modifications to see what the next step would be. This will form the basis for discussion for this paper.

Adjustments regarding memory prompting were the big issue. Natural nervousness to the newness and the competitive environment were resolve by experience. The very willing support of the sighted partner was very beneficial in helping his partner negotiate the new environment. The student was very adept at the experience of a new environment. The very rule-oriented directors of the tournament, judges and competitors had no problem with the situation and accommodations. The courtesy of informing all parties in advance was necessary as well as the willingness to accept strict guidelines and doing it by-the-book without accommodations if necessary. By being honest and fair in the request no one felt that an unfair advantage occurred. In fact the opponents felt that with a small bit of accommodation the judge was free to really ballot the round on the competition of ideas and no points were lost on sympathy. This became a win-win outcome.

What became evident was that the student with visual disabilities needed a mechanism to recall the flow of the debate round in competition. Sighted debaters needed to look at a flow of the outline in the debate as in was prepared and modified during the round. The student with visual disabilities could not just rely on memory, his opponents did not. The prompting by his partner really improved the rounds and did the experience of more rounds of intercollegiate debate. The Braille printer did not work in the setting.

Since the tournament and in preparation for future tournaments, the student has been preparing for future rounds. In response to the coach's question how he could compete as a lone debater, the student referred to the Braille notebook. This mechanism has been very effective in practice rounds. The student used the natural tool that he had at his use to get through the rest of his day. He was hesitant to make us of this tool as it was a bit clumsy, but in is working. The coach asked for the student to use the notebook. The student keys in code and then puts an then through an earpiece can receive prompts. In the field, the judge and opponents would need to be assured that the notebook is not providing data not extemporaneously inputted by the student on his own in preparation. Secondly, the notebook helps in the flow of the round to record memory prompts that arise in the round and not earlier in preparation of the round.

Future research will look at how these accommodations will work. Other dynamics will arise as this student prepares for IPDA debate, which is extemporaneous and one-person. Additional research will explore data collection nationally regarding the experience of others, further teleconferencing debate experimentation, e-mail debate and hopefully the opportunity to work with other students who need accommodation and have the willingness to work with our debate team. Support for these students is evident; the application is to be further discovered.

Dorothy Jean Yocom, Ph.D.
Associate Professor/Chairperson
Special Education
College of Education
University of Wyoming
P.O. Box 3374
Laramie, WY 82071-3374
307.766.4033
djyocom@uwyo.edu

H. Timothy Blum, M.S.
Middle School Teacher
University of Wyoming Lab School
Albany Co. School District
P.O. Box 3374
Laramie, WY 82071-3374
tblum@uwyo.edu

COMMUNITY BUILDING, THE INCLUSION CLASSROOM AND ADVISOR, ADVISEE TIME

Background: Inclusion and advisory programs

Across the United States, students with special needs are receiving more of their services within the general education classroom. The implementation of inclusion programs in urban, as well as rural schools is progressing at a rapid rate. The tempo at which this educational reform is taking place has alarmed many educators (Daniels & Vaugh, 1999; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). Classroom teachers express concern that they have little understanding of the difficulties faced by students with special needs and little support for developing appropriate teaching procedures (Boyer & Bandy, 1997; Cook, Tankersley, Cook & Landrum, 2000; Klingner & Vauhgn, 1999). While there is no one all-encompassing definition of inclusion, it has come to mean the placement of children with disabilities in the general education classroom for all or some portion of their instructional time (Daniels & Vaughn, 1999). Inclusive educational settings are often part of a larger attempt to pool school resources and incorporate programs in ways to benefit students in general education classrooms (Berres, Ferguson, & Knoblock, 1996; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Miles & Darling-Hammond, 1998). In rural schools general education teachers may well be called upon to teach students with special needs due to reduced numbers of building specialists and the smaller size of schools which, requires educational resources to be shared or spread thin (Boyer & Bandy, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1995).

Inclusion classrooms are a reality for teachers throughout the country. Nationwide the percentage of students identified with special needs in the general education classroom is slightly over 74%, in some states that total approaches or exceeds 90% (US Department of Education, 1995). General education classroom teachers already practice in mixed-ability settings. They face a variety of challenges with many students arriving in the classroom with differing cultures, learning styles, levels of emotional and social maturity and interests. Beyond this diversity the classroom teacher can expect to provide educational services to students with special needs.

Classroom teachers working in today's learning communities interact with very culturally, emotionally and socially diverse populations. The inclusion classroom is part of this diversity. School personnel, teachers, support personnel, administrators, and staff, all seek to address this diversity in a number of ways. School counselors have addressed the issues of inclusion and class diversity through school wide guidance programs.

Guidance and the Middle School

A fundamental principle of middle school philosophy calls for comprehensive guidance programs for students that feature individual or small group settings addressing issues such as respect for self and others, decision-making and goal setting (National Middle School Association, 1998). Educators at the middle school level must provide social and emotional support for their students, giving them the tools they need to regulate behavior and make responsible choices (Brough, 1990; MacIver, 1990). The diversity present in classrooms today challenge the creativity of any teacher to address both academic demands and the creation of a classroom community that allows all students to succeed.

Middle level teachers must be prepared to engage the student with special needs in the activities of the general education classroom. Beyond the issue of academic accommodations, one focus in an inclusion classroom must be to create opportunities for all students to be successful (Steinberg & Wheelock, 1992). The success for adolescents need not come only in academic areas, personal development may be enhanced if they can succeed in other areas (Maynard, 1986). Non-identified middle school students perceive a benefit to relationships within the inclusion classroom in areas beyond academics such as social cognitive growth, increased tolerance of others, development of personal conduct principles, and a reduction in the fear of human differences (Peck, Donaldson & Pezzoli, 1990). Clearly, creating a learning community at the middle school level involves a social as well as academic curriculum, and inclusion students as well as regular education students can benefit from such programs.

The concept of advisory time fits well into an integrated middle school curriculum, where seeking out the concerns of students, then applying the lessons learned to the world in which the student lives is a primary purpose (Beane, 1992). If general education teachers view Advisory Groups as part of the regular classroom approach to learning then the activities, planning and implementation of community building or advisory groups does not become overwhelming. Classroom teachers are more inclined to view advisor group activities in a positive light if a relationship between activities and academic success occurs. Middle school advisory groups created through cooperation of classroom teachers, specialists serving students with disabilities, and school counselors can benefit all students.

Advisory time at the middle school level may include social and academic support utilizing individual conferencing and small group guidance that may address self-esteem issues, problem solving, study skills, peer pressure, health issues, community building and inter-group relationships (MacIver, 1990). At the University of Wyoming Lab School, a school within Albany County Public Schools, a community-building program is part of the comprehensive counseling program offered to our students. Classroom teachers, the counselor, and special educator all work together to offer a program aimed at building self-esteem, responsibility, problem solving, and time-management. School programs that offer a variety of activities for students to cooperatively work with peers provide many opportunities for growth (Epstein & Salines, 1992).

Community Building in the Classroom

Middle school administrators recognize the benefits from the operation of advisory programs in their schools. At risk students were more likely to remain in school, through high school, when their middle school years included strong advisory groups (MacIver, 1990). At the lab school in Laramie students are introduced to an advisor / advisee program that is included in the language arts block time. Eighth and ninth graders are assigned to the same language arts teacher for half a year, while sixth and seventh graders remain a part of the same language arts class for the year. When an advisory program operates in a school where the population reflects a mixing of middle school and high school ages the program is less successful (MacIver, 1990). At the lab school this issue is addressed by using ninth grade students as peer tutors and representatives on student council to help enhance their role as community leaders.

At the lab school, advisor/ advisee activities use core instruction time and must be designed so all students can take part and structured so material covered has an application to other content areas. Most classroom teachers establish rules for classroom operation, and school behavior the very first day of class. Each classroom teacher designs and uses activities that build community within the school. Beyond these core elements, the teachers at the lab school have agreed to work on self-esteem, study skills, stress reduction, decision-making, and problem solving. The umbrella concept that holds our program together features the idea that we are a learning community. There is no stand-alone curriculum for our advisor/advisee groups. As a teaching team middle school teachers identify acceptable behavior, and the areas of concern that need to be addressed. This flexibility allows middle school teachers to address new areas of concern when they arise. After identifying the areas of focus for the year teachers create or gather activities to model, teach and practice the desired behaviors. Teachers share ideas and activities as informal meetings forge a curriculum addressing advisor/advisee themes.

Activities for the advisor/advisee time are completed in twenty to twenty-five minutes during the language arts block time. Most teachers allow students to have ownership in setting rules for the class. Individual classroom teachers may devote daily class time to these activities and then later reduce the time as students demonstrate understanding. Once the expectations for classroom behaviors have been established teachers turn their attention to community building and the various issues of self-esteem, decision-making, problem solving and time management. With the start of the school year students are naturally curious about their teacher and new students in the class. They are also willing to share information about their summer activities. Both these tendencies are natural bridges into the community building activities used by teachers at the lab school.

Community Building Activities

- Personality Bingo: A bingo type card with student accomplishments written in the squares. Students discover individuals who have completed the accomplishments and have them sign the card. Students learn about each other.
- Getting to Know You: This activity has many names. Students may ask the teacher questions and the teacher after answering can ask a question of the student.
- This is Me (this is the group): Students construct a bulletin board using personal artifacts (newspaper clippings, awards, photographs, souvenirs, etc.). Later the group creates a bulletin board for the group.

As groups are working on community building teachers and group members focus on giving positive feedback to group members, complimenting them on appropriate behavior. Teachers can then move the group into time management, decision-making, problem solving, or other agreed upon areas of concern. Teachers who need assistance in creating activities can get ideal from their school counselor.

- My Time: Students keep an accurate log of their time. Discussions focus on use of time, and how to find additional time.
- Personal Assessment form: There are many self-assessment forms which have students identify the ways they learn.
- Personalities: Students complete a personality inventory to assess how they react to events or people. This provides a great deal of material for group discussion.

Activities used by teachers in the advisor/advisee time develop skills, which are transferable to other core classes. Students with special needs are included in the regular education classroom, follow rules, and work to become part of the community like any other student. All students work to develop self-esteem, study skills, decision-making and problem solving skills. Activities for all students are the same during this time, and students recognize that accommodations made for special needs students can benefit all students (Klingner & Vauhgn, 1999). The concept of advisor/advisee time is one that works well in the inclusion classroom. It promotes a sense of community for all students and provides benefits to students in other core areas.

References

Beane, J. A. (1992). Turning the floor over: Reflections on a middle school curriculum. *Middle School Journal*, 23(3) 34-40.

Berres, M. S., Ferguson, D. L., & Knoblock, P. (Eds.). (1996). *Creating tomorrow's schools today: Stories of inclusion, Change, and Renewal*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Boyer, W. A., & Bandy, H. (1997). Rural teachers' perceptions of the current state of inclusion: Knowledge, training, teaching practices, and adequacy of support systems. *Exceptionality*, 7(1), 1-18.

Brough, J. A. (1990). Changing conditions for young adolescents: Reminiscences and realities. Educational Horizons, 68(2) 78-81.

Cook, B. G., Tankersley, M., Cook, L., & Landrum, T. J. (2000). Teachers' attitudes toward their inclusion students with disabilities. Exceptional Children, 67(1), 115-135.

Daniels, V. I., & Vaughn, S. (1999). A tool to encourage 'best practice' in full inclusion. Teaching Exceptional Children, 31(5), 48-55.

Epstein, J. & Salinas, K. C. (1992). *Promising programs in the middle grades*. Reston, Va. National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (1994). Inclusive schools movement and the radicalization of special education reform. *Exceptional Children*, 60,294-309.

Klingner, J. K. & Vaughn, S. (1999). Students' perceptions of instruction in inclusion classrooms: Implications for students with learning disabilities. Exceptional Children, 66(1), 23-37.

Lipsky, D., & Gartner, A. (1997). *Inclusion of school reform: Transforming America's classrooms.* Baltimore: Brookes.

MacIver, D. J. (1990). Meeting the needs of young adolescents: Advisory groups, interdisciplinary teaching teams, and school transition programs. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 71(6) 458-464.

Maynard, G. (1986). The reality of diversity at the middle level. *The Clearing House*, 60 21-23.

Miles, K. H., & Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Rethinking the allocation of teaching resources: Some lessons from high-performing schools. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 20(1), 9-29.

National Middle School Association. (1998). This we belive developmentally responsive middle level schools (p. 31-32). Columbus, Ohio: National Middle School Association.

Peck, C. A., Donaldson, J. & Pezzoli, M. (1990). Some benefits nonhandicapped adolescents perceive for themselves from their social relationships with peers who have severe handicaps. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 15(4) 241-249.

Steinberg, A. & Wheelock, A. (1992). After tracking-what? Middle schools find new answers. *The Harvard Education Letter*, 8(5) 1-5.

U.S. Department of Education. (1995). Appendix A. In Twentieth annual report to congress (p. A-50). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Karen Sealander
Catherine Medina
Armanda Gamble
Bobbie Pettigrew
Maria Snyder
Sherri White
Mary Helen Begay
Brian Bradley
Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson
Connie Heimbecker
Nellie McCarty
Bernita Nelson
Jacob Nelson
Jody Smith
Marsha Whitehair
Denise Redsteer
Greg Prater

Northern Arizona University
Center for Excellence in Education
PO Box 5774
Flagstaff, Arizona
86011

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION PARTNERSHIPS ON THE NAVAJO RESERVATION WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

Introduction

Kayenta, Arizona is home to the Kayenta Unified School District (KUSD). The Navajo people refer to the town as "Todaneezhai" (spouting water). Kayenta is situated on the northeastern part of the State of Arizona. It comprises a populace of 6,500 residents. The township is located in the interior of the Navajo Nation, which covers 24,000 square miles and is the largest Native American reservation within the United States. Kayenta's locale is surrounded by some of nature's greatest natural wonders and it is known for its many tourist attractions. Monument Valley with its spectacular monolith formations lies about 23 miles north of Kayenta. About 30 miles west of Kayenta is Betatakin, where an ancient Anasazi ruin can be viewed. Canyon de Chelly, one of Navajoland's most popular all-day adventures, is located about 65 miles southeast of Kayenta. There are several other unique formations of rock and hills that present a very scenic flavor to the vicinity of Kayenta. There is also an abundance of desert wildlife and domesticated animals that can be seen roaming the rural flatlands surrounding Kayenta.

The Kayenta Unified School District includes schools which offer instruction at the Primary level (Kindergarten to grade two), Intermediate level (grades three to five), Middle level (grades six to eight), and High School level (grades nine to twelve). The District serves 2,626 students, and draws from an area of 3,000 square miles. It is not rare for some KUSD students to travel by bus for four hours a day over dirt and rough roads. A KUSD home language survey indicates that Navajo is the primary language spoken in 92% of student homes, although students may not be completely fluent in English or Navajo. Two hundred and twenty-three students are enrolled in the Special Education program in the KUSD.

In addition to providing instruction to school age students, KUSD through a cooperative venture between the District and Northern Arizona University's Center for Excellence in Education (NAU-CEE) provides training for students who want to become teachers. The joint project called the Reaching American Indian Special/Elementary Educators (RAISE) program is dedicated to providing education leading to a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education and is funded by a grant from the Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS). The program is delivered to cohorts of students in their local communities who spend one and one-half years together (Sealander, Eigenberger, Peterson, Shellady, and Prater, in press). RAISE has been described as a program transported to the reservation. This *transporting* enables local participants to complete a degree program while remaining with their families, retaining their jobs, and sustaining their support networks (Heimbecker, Minner, & Prater, 2000).

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to inform interested individuals about the collaboration existing between the KUSD, Navajo Nation, and the Kayenta community, with regards to Early Childhood Education programs. These collaborative efforts provide Early Childhood Education (ECE) through the following three programs: Acceptance Belonging Caring (ABC) Preschool, Navajo Nation Department of Head Start (NNDOHS), and the Child Care Occupational Parenting Education Center (COPE). Each of these unique programs offer and provide services that differ slightly. Initially information will be provided about the similarities and differences that exist between the three programs. Secondarily, we will provide a description of each organization's program, origins, purpose, funding, criteria for eligibility, special needs services, and so forth.

Methods

Research was conducted primarily through questionnaires, and secondarily through review of relevant documents. In addition, the researchers shared their professional experience and expertise working with two of the three programs described. Three different questionnaires were developed to target three different parties involved with the three selected programs. The first questionnaire targeted parents of regular and special needs children who utilize the ABC, NNDOHS and COPE programs. The second questionnaire targeted staff employed by these organizations, including certified teachers, educational specialists (Speech Therapists and Physical Therapists), and educational assistants. The third questionnaire targeted program administrators (the Vocational Education Director for KUSD who is involved with COPE, and the Itinerant Special Education Provider for KUSD who is involved with Head Start and ABC). Approximately 141 questionnaires were distributed in total, and approximately 46 were completed either independently, via telephone or through face to face interaction.

Survey questions focused on the three main objectives of the research. These objectives helped when categorizing responses of surveyed parents, support facilitators and administrators. Administrators were asked about the history, funding, enrollment, benefits, and success of their respective programs. Parents were asked how a particular ECE program helped address their child's needs, and how they felt about bilingual education and inclusion being incorporated into their child's ECE programs. Questions asked of the support facilitators focused on the profile of services offered by the ABC Preschool, Head Start and COPE programs. Facilitators were asked how these three programs worked cooperatively within the district to provide the local community with a collaborative effort by parents, educators and support facilitators. Finally we asked the support facilitators how bilingual education (i.e. including Navajo language and culture into programs) might help a child with a disability.

Survey Questions

The Vocational Education Director for KUSD involved with COPE, and the Itinerant Special Education Provider for KUSD involved in Head Start and ABC, were asked the following questions:

1. What is the C.O.P.E/Head Start/ABC program?
2. How was C.O.P.E/Head Start/ABC created?
3. When was it created?
4. What is its primary purpose?
5. How is it funded? Federal, State, Navajo Nation?
6. Who can enroll in the program?
7. What are the criteria?
8. Does the program serve any special needs? If so, how are the special needs served?
9. Does the program stress early education with an emphasis on special education?
10. Does this program help the local community? If so in what ways does it help?
11. Is bilingual education involved? If so, do you think it is beneficial? How does it apply to special needs?
12. Are referrals made from other places? If so, where, who?
13. Has the program been successful?

14. What recommendations would you suggest for improvement or otherwise?

ABC, Head Start and COPE support facilitators were asked:

1. What services are you able to provide and/or offer at the ABC Program, COPE and/or Head Start Program?
2. How are you able to involve the parents, the community, and the teaching staff in implementing services to be received by the child with the disability?
3. In an overview of the ABC Program, COPE, and/or the Head Start Program, how are services rendered to children with disabilities?
4. In an overview of the program(s) mentioned, discuss the unique qualities that the program provides to the community in a cooperative effort with parents, educators, and other support facilitators.
5. What types of special equipment are utilized with the different programs?
6. Being in a rural area, do you use alternative methods in assisting a child with Special Needs?
7. What is your expertise?
8. What is the referral procedure for a child with special needs. Is a referral made prior to services rendered?
9. Are referral procedures different with each individual program? How?
10. It has been mentioned that there is more focus geared towards implementing the Navajo language and culture into these programs, if so, how is it done?
11. How does bilingual education help a child with a disability?

Questions directed towards parents included:

1. What services have been provided to you and your child through the Head Start, ABC Preschool, and/or COPE program?
2. Do you feel that in receiving the services mentioned above your child has grown in a positive manner? If so, how and what do you see?
3. What recommendations would you make in helping to improve the program services?
4. Has the program been beneficial to your child? If so, please explain.
5. How do you feel about inclusion?
6. How do you feel about the implementation of Bilingual education into these?

Results

General Findings:

Preliminary findings suggest that while Head Start and ABC share many similarities, they are different from COPE in a variety of ways. Unlike COPE, the majority of support facilitators from Head Start and ABC stated that the primary purpose of their program is to provide quality care and special education intervention services to eligible children within the KUSD boundaries. Again unlike COPE, the majority of the parents with children at Head Start and ABC responded that the purpose of their child's program was to provide services that addressed the special needs of their children (special programs and equipment, individualized attention, instruction of basic skills, etc.). In contrast, the COPE Center employees responded that they do not serve special needs children because they are not equipped for this. With the help of Child Find (a community advertisement for special needs screening of children between 0-21 months) COPE does make special needs referrals to either ABC or Head Start.

While the age of enrollment for children with the COPE program stemmed from 6 weeks old to 3 years old, ABC Preschool and Head Start both enroll children from only 3 to 5 years old. Respondents from both ABC and Head Start stated that they offer services to all eligible special needs students, and advocate a fully inclusive environment. Both ABC and Head Start evaluate children through a Child Find screening or by referrals. Both organizations described a similar referral process including: 1) a 45 Day Screening Instrument completed by classroom teachers 2) referrals made by teachers, parents or students themselves, and 3) Child Study Teams (problem solving groups) which convene to explore options and suggest behavioral strategies.

In contrast to the differences documented above, respondents from all three programs stated that they have similar funding sources (state, federal and the Navajo Nation). Again however, COPE differed slightly in that this organization also receives some tuition funds from parents who use the center. In addition, respondents (parents and employees) from all three organizations unanimously stated that their programs were successful and provided much needed quality services to Kayenta and the Navajo Nation.

Program Descriptions:

Respondents involved with the ABC Preschool described this program as a fully inclusive program that is operated under the Special Education Department of the KUSD. The ABC Preschool offers intervention services for children with severe disabilities and/or developmental delays. Students use varied special equipment including standees, wheelchairs, nebulizers, suction machines, walkers, tube feeding devices, and braces. The ABC program uses a developmental curriculum that is modified to meet the needs of all students. The ABC preschool creates opportunities and experiences that benefit both students with disabilities, and their non-disabled peers. The program accepts referrals from the Indian Children's Program through Northern Arizona University's Institute for Human Development, Arizona Early Intervention Program (AZEIP), Division of Developmental Disability, Growing In Beauty, and the local Child Find.

ABC Preschool was created out of the Adaptive Learning Center (ALC) which offers services to students with a variety of disabilities. While children enrolled in ALC had no opportunity to interact with "typical" children from preschool age through second grade, the ABC program was created in 1989 as part of the Full Inclusion Initiative instituted by Dr. Dennis Bissmeyer, former KUSD Special Education Director. Any child 3-5 years can enroll in the ABC program if they have been 1) identified through Child Find as having a disability or severe developmental delay or 2) served by an Early Intervention Program. In addition, every year the program accepts five "regular" students who will interact positively with the special needs students. The "regular" students' names are drawn from a lottery, and each child must be four years old, by September 1st of that school year.

The ABC program helps the local community by providing opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's classroom. It also offers special needs employment and training for staff. Encouraging "regular" students to interact with special needs students benefits both groups of students and helps the local community to be more aware and accepting of individuals with disabilities.

Recently, students in ABC began learning basic concepts for kindergarten readiness in both Navajo and English. As one Itinerant Special Educator suggested, "Bilingual [education] expands the pathways in the brain and strengthens cognitive abilities. Children with special needs benefit from exposure to songs in any language."

The Navajo Nation Department of Head Start program provides ECE services to both regular children and those with only mild disabilities (primarily speech challenges). The Kayenta Unified School District works in conjunction with the NNDOHS, and provides five classrooms at the KUSD Primary School. Head Start makes referrals to the ABC Preschool if a child's needs cannot be met under the Head Start program. This Head Start program provides comprehensive services intended to strengthen family dynamics and help children develop to their fullest potential. Federal funds for Head Start are allocated to the Navajo Nation, which distributes the money to various agencies.

Head Start was established in 1965 to provide low-income children with the opportunity to build a foundation of intellectual and social development before entering kindergarten. The program came to the Navajo Nation in 1965. The program benefits the community by providing much needed services to low-income families and families of children with mild disabilities. The Federal Family Poverty Income Guidelines are still used to determine eligibility, and the program is intended to help address poverty. Families receiving public assistance or having children in foster care are eligible. Children in Head Start are entitled to all programs and services for which they are eligible, based on an evaluating team's decision. If a student's needs exceed Head Start's capabilities, a referral is made to ABC Preschool. Child Find also makes occasional referrals. A KUSD Itinerant special education teacher is assigned to all Head Start sites located within the KUSD area (Navajo Nation, 2000).

In 1991 the Navajo Head Start Program fully merged under the Navajo Tribe, and the program is currently operating as a department under the Navajo Nation Division of Education. In the fall of 1995 an Executive Order was signed by President Albert Hale, mandating that the Navajo Language be used as the language of instruction at all Navajo Nation Head Start facilities (Navajo Nation, 1995). In summary, the Head Start program has been, and continues to be, successful.

The Child Care Occupational Parenting Education Center was established in 1988 by a group of educators and parents who saw the need for such a center. These parents and educators applied for grants, received funding, and initiated the program. The COPE Center provides quality child care to teenage mothers who are attending high school. In addition, the program also provides child care for district employees and community members.

The COPE program educates students who are in the High School via the Occupational Child Care (OCC) vocational program. Students enrolled in the program learn the occupation of a Child Care Worker. In addition, students who have a child and attend the High School are trained on parenting skills. Children enrolled in the center learn songs, play together, and are taught early education skills

The Center receives funding from federal and state governments via students who are in the Occupational Child Care (OCC) vocational program. Additional funds are secured through Department of Economic Securities, which provides money for children's daily meals. Navajo Nation provides funds for those children who qualify for assistance in Child Care. Teachers and community members make child care tuition payments. Teenage mothers who attend the KUSD High School and utilize the center for their infants, are funded in part by the Vocational Education Department within the KUSD.

Enrollment into the COPE Program is available to any child between the ages of one month and three years. The State of Arizona requires that COPE provide child care for children only up to three years of age. As mentioned, COPE does not serve special needs students because it is not adequately equipped. When the Center was first built, special needs services were not included in the Center's grants and funds.

The COPE program helps the community by providing extended child care to all people. The Center is regularly inspected for compliance in areas such as safety, ratio of staff vs. children, nutrition, and regulations for Arizona Child Care Centers. The Child Care Occupational Parenting Education Center is viewed as one of the best childcare facilities in the area. Center staff incorporates weekly lesson plans for children, and those attending are involved in a number of early education activities. The center includes a bilingual education component. Many parents request that their child be spoken to in Navajo, and Center staff is fluent in Navajo. Cradleboards (a traditional Navajo instrument used to safely secure very young children) are available for those who wish to use them.

Conclusion

Early Childhood Education, especially in a rural area such as Kayenta, has its difficulties and challenges. However, our findings show that ABC Preschool, Head Start and COPE work cooperatively to provide quality services for every child who enrolls in their programs. These organizations share information and incorporate Navajo culture into their programs. Together these organizations make the best possible effort to help a child learn to their fullest potential. ABC Preschool and Head Start work collaboratively to ensure that all special needs referrals are made, and that the needs of children with disabilities are met within their organizations. While the COPE program does not provide special needs services, it does work with KUSD and the community to provide much needed "regular" child care services. COPE employees are informed in the area of special education, and are able to assist families with referral information when the need arises.

References

Navajo Nation (1995) Head Start Executive Order. Window Rock, Arizona: Navajo Nation Division of Education, Navajo Nation.

Navajo Nation (2000) Head Start Mission Statement Window Rock, Arizona: Navajo Nation Division of Education, Navajo Nation.

Sealander, K., Eigenberger, M., Peterson, P., Shellady, S., and Prater, G. (in press). Challenges facing educators in rural, remote, and isolated areas: Using what we know and what we have learned. Rural Special Education Quarterly.

Bryan Davey
Melina Alexander
Claudia Edmonson
Donald Stenhoff
Utah State University

Send correspondence to:
Richard P. West
School of the Future
Utah State University
Logan, Utah 84341

THE EFFECTS OF A DISCRIMINATIVE STIMULUS, PAIRED WITH INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP REWARD CONTINGENCIES, ON THE DECIBEL LEVELS IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LUNCH ROOM

The current investigation is a replication, with modifications in setting and dependent variables, of the West et al. (1995) article. West et al. (1995) conducted a musical clocklight study, which encouraged positive classroom behavior. The study also improved upon the original clocklight by adapting new technologies and adding a radio/tape player. The original clock-light (sans music) was part of the Program for Academic Survival Skills (PASS), a classroom management program at the Center at Oregon for Research in the Behavioral Education of the Handicapped (CORBEH) at the University of Oregon (Green wood, Hops, Delquadri, & Walker, 1974). PASS was initially used in elementary school classrooms as a group management program for educational related behaviors. Its most significant characteristics were (a) a group reward contingency; (b) importance of following clearly stated rules; and (c) a clocklight instrument that signaled the students when all of them were following the rules and accumulated and recorded the total amount of time the rules were followed.

Group reinforcement contingencies have shown to be successful by Young, Likins & Johnson. (1982). Their group reinforcement procedures was effective in increasing on-task and rule-following behavior of a third-grade class of 52 students that included four behavior problem students referred to special education. The intervention included the teachers setting a class goal and the class selecting a group activity for meeting the goal.

Through this study a comparison was made to determine the effects of a musical clock-light, paired with individual and group reward contingencies on the decibel levels in an elementary school lunchroom. This study was conducted within a northern Utah Elementary school lunchroom. The subjects were 256 elementary students ranging from ages 5-12. Our results indicate that a musical clocklight, combined with individual and group rewards were successful in reducing decibel levels within a lunchroom, across groups, when compared to baseline levels. Results are promising, however, further research on the utility of this musical clocklight when paired with individual and group reward contingencies across contexts and groups is warranted.

The Effects of a Musical Clock-Light Program, Paired with Individual and Group Reward Contingencies, on the Decibel Levels in an Elementary School Lunch Room

Method

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted within a northern Utah elementary school lunchroom. The lunchroom was approximately 40' x 80'. The east wall included two separate doors, one entrance and one exit. The space directly in front of the exit door, inside the lunchroom contained the students' reading rug, a carpet about 7' X 7'were students would sit and read upon completion of their meal. The west side of the lunchroom constituted the lunch lines, lunch trays, silverware, beverage dispenser, and salad bar. The kitchen and dishwashing station were located on the north side of the building is where the clock light was located on the south wall. The center of the lunchroom consisted of 15 round tables, each with the capacity to seat 8 students. They were placed in rows of 6, 4, and 5, respectively. The lunchroom staffs, and a maximum of two parent volunteers (not always the same), were also present in the lunchroom during the study. The subjects were 256 elementary students ranging from age 5 - 12. The students were divided into two groups, based on the time their class arrived at the lunchroom. Group I had completely exited the lunchroom before Group II arrived. Group I included 148 students, enrolled in kindergarten through 3rd grade. Group II included 184 students, enrolled in grades 3 through 5.

Materials/Apparatus

Materials for the Musical Clock-Light Program (MCLP) included; (a) a Radio Shack Digital Sound Level Meter with the capability to monitor and display decibels from 1 to 120, (b) musical clock-light set-up, which included a stoplight such as those used for traffic signals. The clocklight lights (red, yellow, and green) were set to differing criteria: the green light illuminated if the decibel level was at 73.5 dB or less; the yellow light illuminated if the noise level was at 73.6 to 74.5 decibels, the red light illuminated if the noise level exceeded 74.6 decibel, an analogue clock, a microphone used to detect noise levels; a CD player, and CD's chosen by the principal; (c) data sheets containing two tables, ten columns by five rows, one for each lunch period, and a space at the bottom of each table for the time accumulated on the analogue clock, (d) small reinforcers, such as super-balls, pencils, erasers, and stickers; no edibles, (e) larger reinforcers such as notebooks, address books, pencil sets, gift certificates, and larger toys, (f) raffle tickets, and (g) poster to track daily progress.

Measurement and Data Collection

The average decibel levels in the lunchroom during sessions were measured using the sound level meter. The decibel readings were taken at 30-second intervals during each of the two lunch periods and recorded on the daily data sheet for the duration of the study. The time accumulated on the analogue clock was recorded at the end of each session on the data sheet during the Clock-light Program. At the conclusion of the study the staff of the lunchroom, along with the principal of the school were interviewed through a consumer survey. This survey measured the perceived effectiveness of the clock-light program.

Experimental Conditions

Baseline

Prior to the baseline condition, the musical clock-light program was installed in the lunchroom, with the exception of the CD player which was already present. The MCLP was non-operational during the baseline condition. Decibel levels were taken at 30-second intervals, during each group's 25 minute lunch sessions. Observers were stationed in the lunchroom, on the north wall, in close proximity to the student reading rug and exit. Students would enter the lunchroom after recess and give their lunch numbers to the lunch administrator. The children would then cross to the far side of the room and pick up a hard plastic tray, silverware, and a beverage. Next they would then continue to the kitchen window and receive their lunch. Upon receiving their lunch students would proceed to a table of their own choosing to eat. When the students finished eating they would present their tray to the adult volunteer located at the dishwashing station and retire to the reading rug. Once at the reading rug students would wait for 10-15 minutes before being excused to class. There was limited supervision by the principal and/or staff in the lunchroom. In a non-systematic manner the principal would walk thought the lunchroom and prompt and praise appropriate behaviors. Occasionally, the principal would clap three times to draw the student's attention. The principal would then prompt students to display appropriate lunchroom behavior. The baseline condition continued for each group until the MCLP was introduced and implemented. Form the data collected during the baseline condition the musical clock-light's decibel sensitivity level was determined.

Musical Clock- Light Program Condition

On the day prior to the initial session researchers introduced the musical clock-light program to the children and reminded the students to use appropriate behavior in the lunchroom. Appropriate behavior was described as using "2 inch voices" (speaking with a tone that can only be heard from 2-inches away), feet on the floor, and pockets on the seat. Students were informed that the stoplight on the wall would control the delivery of music and the accumulation of time on the clock.

The students were instructed that researchers would walk around the lunchroom during the lunch period, presenting those displaying appropriate behaviors with individual rewards. Students were informed that the stoplight (red, yellow, and green) would change in accordance with the noise level in the lunchroom. The researcher stated, that while the light was green or yellow, music from the lunchroom sound system would play and the minute hand of the clock would begin to accumulate time. If the light turned red the music would stop, and the clock would not accumulate minutes. Upon accumulating 12 days, at 20-miutes each on the clock, the students would be rewarded a pizza party. This instruction took approximately five minutes.

The two types of contingencies presented during this condition were: (a) A*ge appropriate individual rewards*; small items to Group I and raffle tickets to Group II. The students in Group II would put their name and classroom number on the tickets and deposit them into a container provided by the researchers. Larger prizes were then distributed to 3 winners daily, following the lunch period. Age appropriate individual rewards were presented to those displaying appropriate behavior. (b) *Group reward*, a Domino's ™ pizza party, contingent upon a group accumulating 20 minutes or more on the clock, for12 days. The accumulation of days was tracked on a poster, which was displayed in the lunchroom.

The conditions for data collection, setting and daily procedures of the lunchroom, described in baseline went unchanged throughout the MCLP condition. The difference was the implementation of the MCLP. During the MCLP condition the following occurred: (a) at the beginning of each lunch period researches activated the MCLP, (b) the researchers randomly prompted students as they walked into the lunchroom to keep their eyes on the clock-light and use appropriate lunchroom behavior, and on occasion the principal, lunchroom staff and/or volunteers would also prompt appropriate behavior, (c) researchers walked around the lunchroom and praised students, presenting individual rewards of small reinforcers to those displaying appropriate behavior, (d) if the daily criteria was achieved, researchers would clap to draw attention to the clock and congratulate the students. The researchers then recorded the achievement on the poster. At the conclusion of Group I's lunch period the MCLP was turned off and the clock was reset to 12:00. Upon Group II's arrival the MCLP procedures were implemented in the same manner as for Group I, with the exception of a change in the reinforcers. Group II received raffle tickets as reinforcers. The students put their name and classroom number on the tickets and deposited them into a container provided by the researchers. Three winning ticket were selected each day. The MCLP condition continued until the Group contingency was meet. At this time the MCLP, was withdrawn and the group contingency was presented.

Withdrawal of CLP (Group I only)

The condition constitutes a return to the baseline condition in its entirety. The day after the presentation of the group contingency, Group I returned to the baseline conditions listed above. The MCLP set up remained in the lunchroom but was inactive. The decibel readings were taken at 30-second intervals for the 25-minute lunch period.

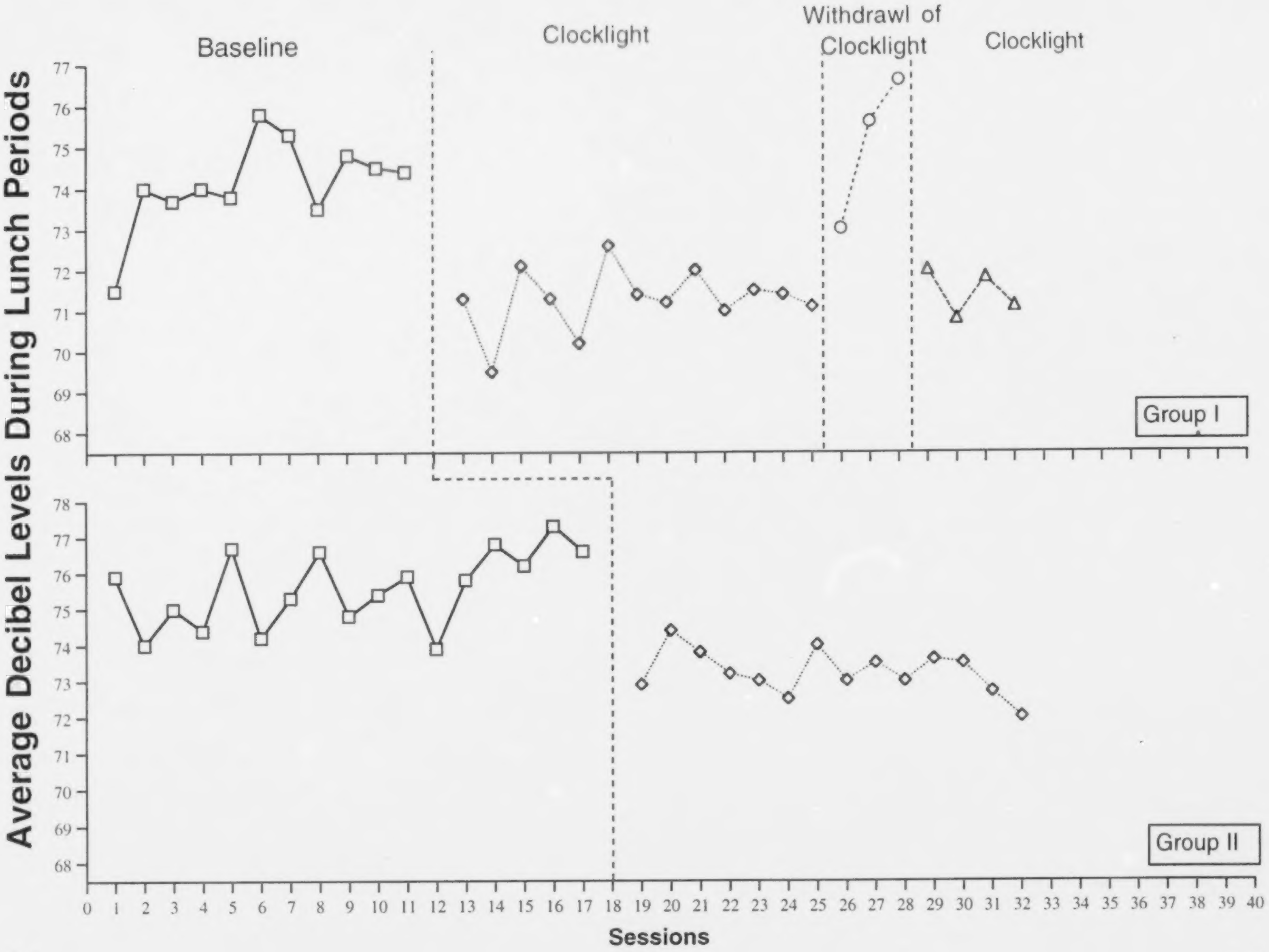
Design and General Procedure

The current study was conducted in two phases across two groups. The first phase consisted of a baseline measurement of decibel levels during the two groups' lunch periods. Phase 2, following baseline, included the implementation of a discriminative stimulus (the clocklight), paired with individual and group reward contingencies conducted within a multiple baseline across groups design. A withdrawal phase was implemented for Group I (Richards, Taylor, Ramasamy, & Richards, 1999), to further illustrate the effects of the independent variables. The evaluation was conducted by comparing the baseline decibel levels with those recorded during the intervention phase. The results were then compared across the two groups of students. Through these comparisons, the effects of the independent variables were illustrated.

Results

Average decibel levels were compared during baseline and the intervention phase. The data illustrates the clocklight paired with reward contingencies decreased the average decibel levels across two groups.

The average decibel level during baseline was 74.2 dB for Group I and 75.6 dB for Group II. The decibel level during the MCLP condition averaged 71.3 dB for Group I; and rebounded to 75 dB during the withdrawal phase. The average decibel level during the MCLP for Group II was 73.2 dB. The data shows a 2.9 dB decrease in sound levels between baseline and the MCLP for Group I. Group II's data illustrates a 2.4 dB decrease in sound level between baseline and the MCLP phase. For both groups the decibel levels decreased with the implementation of the MCLP.



Figrue 1. The Effects of a Clocklight on the Decibel Levels in an Elementary Lunchroom

Discussion

This study illustrates the use of a discriminative stimulus, the musical clocklight, paired with contingent rewards, significantly decreased the decibel levels in an elementary school lunchroom. The lunchroom staff and school principal were pleased with the results of this experiment. This was shown by results from a consumer survey. The children involved in this study were also pleased. They made comments to the researchers asking if it could continue. The use of a musical clock-light can be replicated many school settings. This has been shown as in previous research, which our study supported. The experiment did have some limitations. The decibel meter used to monitor decibels was not placed in close proximity to the microphone used to measure levels for the clocklight; this would occasionally pose a problem if a noise were made directly next to the decibel meter. Although results are promising, additional research on the utility of this discriminative stimulus (the musical clocklight), individual and group reward contingencies across contexts and groups is warranted.

References

Greenwood, C.R., Hops, H., Delquadri, J. & Walker, H. M. (1974). PASS: Program for Academic Survival Skills: Manual for Consultants. Center at Oregon for Research in the Behavioral Education of the Handicapped: Eugene, OR.

Richards, S. B., Taylor, R. L., Ramasamy, R. & Richards, R. (1999). Single Subject Research: Applications in Educational and Clinical Settings. San Diego, CA: Singular Publishing Group, Inc.

Young, K.R., Likins, M, & Johnson, J. (1982). The Effects of a Group Management System on Disruptive Behavior in an "Open-Style" Classroom. Journal of Special Education Technology, 5, 15-22

West, R. P., Young, K, R., Callahan, K., Fister, S., Kemp, K., Freston, J., & Lovitt, T. C. (1995). The Musical Clocklight: Encouraging Positive Classroom Behavior. Teaching Exception Children, 46-51.

Dorothy Jean Yocom, Ph.D.
Associate Professor/Chairperson
Special Education
College of Education
University of Wyoming
P.O. Box 3374
Laramie, WY 82071-3374
307.766.4033
djyocom@uwyo.edu

H. Timothy Blum, M.S.
Middle School Teacher
University of Wyoming Lab School
Albany Co. School District
P.O. Box 3374
Laramie, WY 82071-3374
tblum@uwyo.edu

ENDING THE YEAR IN THE INCLUSION CLASSROOM: SEEKING CONSISTANCY WHILE PROMOTING TRANSITION AND CHANGE

Setting the stage

The last day of classes has arrived. Students have been on edge with anticipation for the last week. This is an early morning curriculum development class for special educators at the University of Wyoming. The students have created a breakfast buffet: they will eat, visit, and present final projects. Classroom tables groan under the weight of fresh fruit, bagels, cream cheese, breakfast casseroles, rolls, and donuts. The professor has carefully structured her class to use this last day to say goodbye to the students. All too soon, the students have presented projects, presented the class with project print outs, exchanged traditional family recipes for casseroles and class is over. There follows a two-week period of uneasiness, this colleague feels troubled by the way her class ended. During this period of time, the focus of this colleague's discomfort centers on a particular student's reaction to the end of class. It was after discussing the elements of closure that she was able to observe that this class had ended in a significantly different way than other classes.

This incident occurred in a university class, in truth it is a scene that repeats itself at every grade level in schools throughout the country. The long awaited last day of school arrives students take part in field day, picnics, or awards ceremonies and teachers walk away from school with an unexplained uneasiness. These teachers are experiencing a transition without sufficient closure. The art of terminating a relationship is essential for the growth of all parties involved. Counselors have long recognized the importance of being able to bring positive closure to counseling relationships (Anthony & Pagano, 1998; Boyer & Hoffman, 1993; Corey & Corey, 1992; Quintan & Holahan, 1992). The process of bringing closure to a classroom experience is no less important for teachers at all levels. Teachers at the elementary, middle, secondary, and post secondary levels all need to conduct closure exercises at the completion of their classes. Due to the differing ability levels activities will be different, but no less important. To ignore these activities invites that vague unsettled feeling some educators experience at the end of the school year. How does the counseling element of closure, or termination, enter into the classroom venue and how can teachers successfully employ this procedure?

The Process of Termination

The inclusion of students with special needs in the regular education classroom is more than the law, it is happening all across the country. The creation of inclusion programs in urban as well as rural schools is moving forward at a rapid pace, and creating concern among general education classroom teachers (Daniels & Vaugh, 1999; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). As teachers initiate classroom expectations each new school year they are engaging in a process no different then counselors creating an effective counseling group. The stages of counseling groups are identified as the initial, transition, working, and ending stages (Corey & Corey, 1992). The initial stage establishes goals, creates norms for the group, develops group cohesion and builds trust between group members and the leader. Initial stage activities are no different than the activities teachers engage in to introduce classroom rules and expectations. The transition stage is characterized by defensiveness among members and a struggle for control, which is not so different from students testing the limits and resolve of classroom teachers at the beginning of the year. The working stage of a group occurs when members work together and all participate, as with the students in a classroom when they understand the expectations of the class and strive to complete work accordingly. With group therapy the ending stage, termination, is a time when members clarify the meaning of their experiences.

Counselors, specialists, as well as classroom teachers must develop practices that address social as well as academic issues in the classroom. Any classroom, not just the inclusion classroom, represents a group of individuals who have been placed in an intense relationship for a school year. Individuals in these relationships must form social groups that require communication and interaction skills. These skills, including sequential components, participation, making choices, and solving problems, represent learning opportunities in general education classes (York & Vandercook, 1990). The completion of the school year signals the end of a group relationship, and as in counseling the teacher needs to address termination issues.

In the inclusion classroom termination must be a time for reflection as well as celebration. Teachers and schools have become accomplished at celebrating the end of the school year where there are class field days, whole school picnics, and awards ceremonies in front of the entire student body. Teachers and students get so caught up in the creation of an ending celebration that they often neglect the reflective aspect of termination. The collaboration that occurs in the inclusion classroom is a relationship formed between classroom teachers, building specialists, and students featuring interpersonal communication, tolerance, reflectivity, and flexibility (Olson, Chalmers & Hoover, 1997). The conclusion of the school year is a difficult time for teachers and students alike. Termination of relationships fosters painful feelings often accompanied by emotional acting out (Anthony & Pagano, 1998; Boyer & Hoffman, 1993). Termination is also about new beginnings and positive reactions such as pride, excitement, and a sense of having succeeded (Fortune, Pearlingi & Rochelle, 1992). The process of termination begins with the structure of the class that is formed at the start of each new school year.

Teachers create their working relationships with students, involving the same stages as counselors. Teachers and students are involved in setting the norms for the class, the expectations for behavior and work. Rules and expectations will be tested in the classroom setting. As the structures of the classroom are understood students work to meet those expectations. At the end of the year teachers must say goodbye to students they have developed a relationship with over the year. These activities do not change when speaking of the inclusion classroom. The goal of inclusion classroom is to create a learning community where all students are included in formal and informal operations (York & Vandercook, 1990). School districts set ending dates for teachers in the classroom, just as counselors set ending dates for groups. The reaction to termination may be manifested by actions similar to those involved with loss and grief (Boyer & Hoffman, 1993).

In order to address those feelings of loss or anxiety associated with termination specific steps must be taken before actually concluding a relationship. Counselors and clients make plans, hold discussions related to a definite ending time, engage in activities and reflections that focus on the history of group sessions, plan and discuss member activities after the close of a group, and engage in activities that signal the completion of a group (Corey & Corey, 1992). Through the group process, modeling and practice of appropriate behavior takes place, so that members can transfer and apply what they have learned in the group setting to their own lives (Kottler & Forester-Miller, 1998). Just as counselors must plan for the termination process teachers must also lay the groundwork for a positive transition to the next grade at school. The elements of successful group closure in counseling are also the essential elements teachers must use in ending the school year and saying goodbye to their class. The vague unsettled feeling some teachers experience at the close of the school year relates to how successful they have been in providing closure for their classes.

The university professor with the unsettled feeling at the end of her class had carefully planned activities, built in time for reflection, created a closing activity, but due to a time conflict plans had to be altered. While the activities had been planned, the reflection time within the closing activity was cut short, thereby making the activity incomplete. Classroom teachers make and discuss plans for ending classes on a regular basis. Teachers brief students about assignments and negotiate due dates as the year progresses. Practically all schools hold some type of year ending activity for their students, usually involving some type of physical activity. The activities that are often forgotten in this termination process are the reflective pieces. Activities that focus on the accomplishments of the class as a whole, individual growth, plans for the future, and plans for participation in the closing activity. Celebrations are important pieces of the termination process, but equally important are the reflections students have of the past year and the plans they create for the future (Boyer & Hoffman, 1993; Fortune, Pearlingi & Rochelle, 1992; Schumm & Vaughn, 1991; Quintana & Holahan, 1992).

Closure at a Middle School

The process of closure is for everyone, teachers and students alike. The teacher seeking to move toward closure for any class needs to embed the closing activities in the normal structure of the class. At the University of Wyoming Lab School, in the middle school, the termination or closure activities are an extension of the advisor/advisee time. These activities use core language arts time, and have application in the regular education classroom. Since teachers operate the advisor/advisee time out of core subject areas application of the activities to the curriculum and standards is important.

One group of students reflecting on the year at the middle school discussed what things would be important for students to know entering the sixth grade. During this discussion students remembered what it was like for them entering the middle school. Out of this discussion the students generated a list of important things to know. The teacher, in applying this information to the content curriculum asked each student to write a letter, using correct form, to an incoming student in next year's sixth grade class. Students have processed and reflected upon a history of their class for the year. The ability to brainstorm for the writing process, and the ability to discuss issues in class are benchmarks identified in state standards.

Advisor/advisee groups and the termination process allow teachers, counselors, building specialists and students to address health and wellness benchmarks, and language arts benchmarks while working in small groups. One eighth and ninth grade class would use language arts time to read to a K-One class. During the course of the year this was their community involvement project. At the end of the year the eighth and ninth graders invited the K-One class into the middle school for a party. The eighth and ninth graders planned refreshments, activities, and worked with the K-One class to make a large banner showing all the different books they had read. The party and the banner were elements of the closure this particular group of eighth and ninth graders needed. Later students wrote in their journals about reading to the K-One class.

Eighth and ninth grade students work on closure for the year by planning a dinner where ninth grade students are honored. Ninth grade students put together a presentation about their memories from their time at the school. The ninth graders create a powerpoint demonstration of their years at our school, they interview teachers, write the text, and scan the photos. Part of their responsibility is to roast the teachers at the school. The eighth grade students participate by planning the evening festivities and decorating the site where dinner is held. The evening activities conclude with an address by the principal who gives out certificates to the departing students.

There are classroom parties, field day activities, and an awards assembly, but there are also opportunities for students to reflect on their time at school. This mixture of activities and reflection give students and teachers the opportunity to bring to a close the year at school. Accomplishments are reviewed, both whole class and individual, discussions about what students will take with them to the next class, and a sharing of things they found of value all take place within the classroom. There is a focus on positive elements that students take with them in order to grow as individuals (Fortune, Pearlingi & Rochelle, 1992; Kottler & Forester-Miller, 1998). Building community is part of the activities teachers and students engage in during the early part of the school year. Terminating that relationship, and moving the student successfully along to the next level is the job of teachers and students at the end of the school year. If this is attended to carefully then teachers and students alike will not be left with that vague unsettled feeling that sometimes occurs at the end of the school year.

References

Anthony, S., Pagano, G. (1998). The therapeutic potential for growth during the termination process. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, *26*(3), 281-296.

Boyer, S. P. and Hoffman, M. A. (1993). Counselor affective reactions to termination: Impact of counselor loss history and perceived client sensitivity to loss. *Journal of Counseling Psydchology*, *40*(3), 271-277.

Daniels, V. I. & Vaughn, S. (1999). A tool to encourage 'best practice' in full inclusion. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *31*(5), 48-55.

Fuchs, D. & Fuchs, L. S. (1994). Inclusive schools movement and the radicalization of special education reform. *Exceptional Children*, 60, 294-309.

Fortune, A. E., Pearlingi, B., Rochelle, C. D. (1992). Reactions to termination of individual treatment. *Social Work*, *37*(2), 171-178.

Kottler, J. A. and Forester-Miller, H. (1998). Personal and social change in the lives of group leaders. *Journal For Specialists In Group Work*, *23*(4) 338-349.

Quintana, S. M. and Holahan, W. (1992). Termination in short-term counseling: comparison of successful and unsuccessful cases. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *39*(3), 299-305.

Schumm, J. S. and Vaughn, S. (1991). Making adaptations for mainstreamed students: General classroom teachers' perspectives. *Remedial and Special Education*, *12*(4), 18-27.

York, J. and Vandercook, T. (1990). Strategies for achieving an integrated education for middle school students with severe disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education*, *11*(5), 6-16.

Guy H. Gilberts, Ph.D.
Chadron State College
Chadron, Nebraska 69337

G'DAY MATE OR THE GLOBAL SPECIAL EDUCATOR

Thoughtful educators all agree that one of the basic purposes of education is to help students grow into thoughtful, well-rounded individuals. This would include a global outlook, and a consciousness of oneself as a world citizen. How can a rural educator, general or special, provide this type of environment? Simple, the educator her or himself needs to be a world citizen with a global view of life and others. For those educators in large metropolitan areas with a wealth of cultural and linguistic diversity, the means of continually growing in world awareness is fairly easy. One has only to frequent the restaurants, the cultural activities, and the religious and educational institutions of other cultures. By being involved with these other cultures one can "rub elbows" with new thoughts, behaviors, sights and smells. This is not so easy for rural educators. They may be hundreds of miles away from significant numbers of people who could provide these experiences. What's a teacher to do?

This is exactly the question that Dr. Roger Wess and I asked ourselves. Roger teaches Social Studies and Technology and I teach Special Education at Chadron State College (CSC), a small liberal arts college located in the town of Chadron in the Panhandle of western Nebraska. Chadron is located 20 miles south of the South Dakota border and 60 miles east of the Wyoming border. It has about 5,800 residents and is the largest town for 60 miles going south, 100 miles going north, and 150 miles going either east or west. The students who come to CSC usually come from within a 200-mile radius and generally either grew-up on a farm or ranch, or are the first generation removed from such a life.

CSC was established by the state of Nebraska in 1911 as a normal school. Like a lot of former normal schools in the western part of the United States, CSC has evolved into a liberal arts college while retaining a large emphasis on the education of future teachers. A little more than 40% of the 1,700 full time students are enrolled in education programs. These teacher graduates generally take jobs within a 200-mile radius of the college. Many of the graduates will teach in schools in small towns of 1,000 to 2,000, but most of the schools are rural; ranging from one all inclusive classroom (grades 1-8) to schools which have one classroom per grade level. The major portion of the population in this area can trace its origin back to northern European. The towns are generally small, with stable populations. The supporting businesses are typically either agricultural or actively support agriculture.

What and Why

What

It shouldn't come as a great surprise that when educators start to think of how to accomplish something, they quite often think in terms of a course offering. As Roger and I thought about what we wanted to do (influence educators to be global citizens) we thought that providing a cross-cultural experience with other educators was the way to go. We also wanted the experience to be in rural areas so that our students might more easily generalize ideas and practices from a foreign rural setting to their own rural setting. So, step one was completed, we had decided to construct a cross-cultural course designed to compare the rural educational practices of the western plains states to the rural educational practices of a different country.

Why

Next we needed to justify this comparative course to ourselves, our college, and to those educators whom we hoped to take into a different culture. After a few rewrites, we came up with the following.

> Just as Chadron State College (CSC) seeks to offer its students the best educational practices at our disposal, so do other educational institutions in other parts of the world seek to do the same for their students. It is incumbent upon the faculty of CSC to seek out and utilize best practices wherever they may be found. It is for this reason that we propose to initiate, what we hope will be, an ongoing exchange of educational ideas with other education professionals in other geographically remote and sparsely populated areas of the world.

> Rural education practices and philosophy of the western Nebraska, southern South Dakota, eastern Wyoming, and northeastern Colorado areas will be compared to rural education practices and philosophy as found in rural settings in other parts of the world. Emphasis will be placed on practical field experience in these areas. One of the major purposes of these courses will be to provide an opportunity for students to gain a global view of general and special education and to discover best practices for rural education as implemented in other parts of the world.

Who, When, and Where

Who

The next thing we did was to determine whom we wanted to target. Two groups of "who" readily came to mind: (a) current education students, and (b) practicing educators. If we targeted only current education students, we knew that we would have several problems. College students don't tend to have the money to go on a foreign trip. They also are not teaching and there is the question of whether or not they will actually go into teaching after they graduate. If they do get a teaching job, they may decide to take a position in another state. Recently over 25% of Nebraska education graduates are leaving for higher paying teaching jobs in other states. If Roger and I only targeted current education students, we might actually be helping to make these young people more marketable for competing states. Since we wanted to help our rural educators, we determined that we needed to develop this course for both current education students as well as currently practicing rural teachers and administrators. The educators in the field were already employed in a rural setting and there was a high probability that they would remain in those settings for long periods of time. They also were more likely to have the money needed to participate in a cross-cultural comparative course.

When

The obvious time that fit all the different schedules was during the summer break. Our college breaks for summer at the end of May and starts the third week of August. Most public schools are still in session until the end of May. We wanted to give rural educators some time to "unwind" but not enough time to start other activities. It seemed that two weeks in June would be a good time for the trip. We eventually decided on a trip of 16 days, spanning two weekends. I would advise anyone setting up a trip like this to include two weekends. These are the times when the people you take can do some of their own sight seeing.

Where

The next question was "where can be go during the month of June and observe active teaching?" Most of the educational systems with which we were familiar employed a summer break like what we have. We wanted to step into a school system that was normally active during June. As we thought about it, the answer slowly grew. We are located north of the equator and our summer vacation is during June, July, and August. South of the equator the summer vacation is offset by six months. If we wanted to take rural educators during our summer vacation into schools that were operating in their normal school year, we should look to the Southern Hemisphere.

Roger and I know that very few of our rural educators speak any language other than English. So, the question became "where is English spoken in the Southern Hemisphere? It didn't take us long to determine that Australia was the most logical choice of a place where we could take monolingual rural educators from Nebraska.

Although we had determined that we wanted to offer a cross-cultural, comparative rural education course/trip, that we wanted to target both current education students but focus on practicing teachers and administrators, that it would take place in the month of June, and that we wanted to go to Australia; we were only getting started. We knew that we had to get the college's approval, arouse interest in our target population, narrow our location site in Australia, take care of travel arrangements, and a host of unknown challenges. The "How" of our plans would be the area where we would either succeed or fail.

How

It is important to remember that while I have written about these steps as though they were discrete, they overlapped. We had all of our platters in the air throughout the process. Depending upon deadlines, new information, callbacks, etc.; progress either ran, crawled, "calumped", or had to be dragged.

College Requirements

The first thing that anyone should do when preparing a new course is to check with the "powers that be" for all of the hoops through which one must jump. As we asked around we found out that our college had a Study Abroad committee. It seems that sometime in the past there were others who wanted to similarly impact their students as we in education desired. With a little bit of digging we were able to obtain forms and time dead lines for our proposal. However, I want you to keep this in the back of your mind because I want to talk more about this at a later date.

Contacts

When we determined that Australia would meet our need it dawned on us that Australia is a pretty big place. Where would we take our students? How would we place them in classroom when we didn't know anyone there? Obviously, if one is going to develop a cross-cultural comparative class, one needs to have people at the other end.

We compiled a list of all the people we knew in Australia. As we sat looking at a blank piece of paper, Roger remembered that he knew someone who knew someone in Australia. So, I made the contact and got a name and e-mail address. As it turned out, we stumbled into an aspect of our course that would add a great deal to its impact.

The man whom I contacted teaches at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, New Southwales. It turned out that he was that year's coordinator for the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA) conference. This is a national conference covering all of Australia and drawing attendees from other English speaking countries as well. It was only a small matter to arrange for our students to share a panel discussion with Australian educators. So we determined that the first part of the course would be spent in rural Australian classrooms. The second part would include attendance at the SPERA conference. Our students would be part of a panel discussion comparing rural Australian education with rural U.S. education.

Travel Arrangements

One question you need to answer is "do you want to arrange the travel yourself or will you leave the arrangements to a travel agent?" There are pros and cons with each. If you do it yourself be prepared to spend lots and lots of time on phone calls and working a pencil and piece of paper. A travel agent will relieve you of a lot of stress, but you may not get as good a deal with a travel agent as you can if you do things yourself. Of course, if your idea of a bargain is paying retail prices, you may want to leave things to a travel agent.

One thing to remember, the group needs to get from your college/university to the foreign destination, travel from site to site, and get back to the college/university again. It is easy to forget the travel from site to site. Travel agents usually won't handle this aspect of the trip. You will need to arrange for movement at the destination point by bus, car, train, mule, etc.; and have back-up plans made for just in case.

After working with the group-rate agents at several international airlines, I finally turned our flight work over to a travel agent. However, the "in country" transportation was arranged with the university where we would be located. Using their vehicle would allow us more freedom than if we had to find our own transportation.

Housing

Finding housing was a little tricky. At first we thought that our students could stay in the dorms of the university that was hosting the SPERA conference. Unfortunately, the time schedules of the university and of our trip didn't quite coincide. Eventually, we were able to find rooms at some local motels. Again, it is important that you have a contact in-country. That person can accomplish much more than you in a much shorter amount of time.

Recreational/Cultural Opportunities

We didn't spend too much time considering how to entertain our students. During the work week, they would be involved in rural schools and the SPERA conference. The weekends were free for them to use as they pleased. We set it up so that our students would be in contact with local Australian educators before we went over there. Our hope was that natural social contacts would result.

Health Insurance

The matter of health insurance is important. Rather than enter into an expensive agreement with an agency, we made it mandatory for any and all students to have health insurance that would work in Australia. How they got it was not our problem. They only had to prove that they had insurance that would cover them in other countries.

Syllabus Development

Developing the syllabus wasn't that difficult. At every college/university there are basic parts of the syllabus that are common to all syllabi. The most difficult part was making sure that the syllabus demonstrated that there was an educational purpose to the trip. We were often accused of preparing this course just because we wanted to go to Australia.

Approval

At CSC there are five steps in gaining approval for this type of course.

1. The syllabus is presented to the department, discussed, and voted on by the members of that department. Generally, the main concern at this stage is the educational viability of the course.

2. The syllabus and department recommendation are presented to the Study Abroad Committee. Questions are answered and the vote is taken. This committee is concerned about the educational viability of the course, but it also is concerned with the logistics, such as travel plans, budget, and time table.

3. All paperwork is presented to the Academic Review Committee. Many of the same questions are again asked. A vote is taken and a recommendation is made.

4. The recommendation of the Academic Review Committee is sent to the Vice-President of Academic Affairs. At this point, if the recommendation is for approval, the V-P generally agrees.

5. The V-P asks the President to sign the paperwork. If the Academic Review Committee and the Vice-President of Academic Affairs give their approval, it is almost certain that the President will sign as well.

It is important to plan step 1 with plenty of time to work through step 5 inside the mandated time limit.

Developing a Budget

Obviously, you need to develop a budge for this course. The obvious costs will be plane fare, housing costs, and food. However, don't forget costs like in-country transportation, small gifts to be given to new friends, and the cost of signing up for college/university credit. Will you add the cost of the travel, housing, and food for the host(s) into the average cost per student? If you don't, you may find it hard to get people to host the trip.

A trip to Australia can easily cost $2,500.00 before the student even registers for the credit hours with the college/university. One thing that we did was to setup a search for organizations that would help underwrite some of the student's cost. Generally this will require that you write a small grant.

Approximate Costs: (not including tuition)

Round trip flight		$2,000.00
Housing		320.00
Meals		480.00
Australian Transportation		100.00
Conference Cost		75.00
	Total	2,975.00

Advertisement

We took a two prong approach to advertising for the course. We developed a glossy, color brochure which we planned to send to each of the schools within a 200 miles radius. You thought that rather than sending a brochure to the school district, we would have a much better coverage if we sent several brochures to each school.

We also developed a web site for the course that had a link on CSC's web site. All the material needed by a student (syllabus, country information, application, etc.) easily available for quick download. Having our own web site allowed us to make lots of information available at a low cost, as well as provide a place for students to eventually post their required work.

Surprises

Despite the very best laid plans, always expect surprises. Roger and I had everything all lined out. Our time table was workable. We had good Australian contacts. The travel plans were sound. Our budget was within reach of our target student population. However, we didn't account for the influence of petty politics and time line changes.

When we took our extensive packet to our department one of our faculty members could not, or would not, understand the need for such a course. Finally, the issue of course approval was tabled for the next monthly meeting. At the next meeting, there was almost no discussion and approval was readily given. When we sent the proposal to the Study Abroad Committee we were told that we had missed the dead line. Unbeknownst to us, the final due date had been changed by two weeks and we had missed it.

At first I was quite upset, but then Roger explained that we already were prepared for the next summer. Our cross-cultural course was not defeated, merely postponed.

Conclusion

As a service to rural educators in the western Nebraska, northeastern Colorado, eastern Wyoming, and southwestern South Dakota areas; Chadron State College has developed a course specifically designed to take our rural educators into other countries. The purpose of this course is to place our educators into situations where they observe and take part in education and cultural events in rural areas and with people whom they would probably never have contacted on their own. We want these participants to actively compare their educational practices with those of others. We want the participants to personally engage in cultural dialogue with the expressed purpose of coming away richer. During the summer of 2002, CSC will take a group of rural educators to Australia. Here they will go out into rural communities that are similar to their own and take part in the local schools, as well as sporting, cultural, and religious events.

It is obvious that if we hope to grow partnerships for rural special education we must include others, whether in special education, general education, parents, or administrators. Partnerships are not limited to those who are across the hallway, the county, the state, or even the country. Partnerships can be formed with others who have similar interests and challenges but who live on the other side of the world. If partnerships are to be mutually beneficial, then we should look for those might benefit. Taking our rural educators to other countries, into those rural areas will teach us much in an enjoyable manner.

Checklist

Have you:
_____ Figured out why you want to develop a cross-cultural, foreign based course?
_____ Written out your purpose for the cross-cultural course?
_____ Determined who will be your target population?
_____ Chosen a country to visit?
_____ Checked with college/university administration for proper procedures and paperwork?
_____ Determined how to handle the health insurance issue?
_____ Made contact with persons or institutions in the foreign country?
_____ Set up a time line for the work that needs accomplished?
_____ Set up a time line for the trip and all its parts?
_____ Developed a syllabus?
_____ Set up a web site for the course?
_____ Contacted travel agencies for the best packages?
_____ Set up an in-country itinerary?
_____ Arranged for housing and food in-country?
_____ Set up a budge that is exhaustive?
_____ Contacted agencies and organizations to help offset the student cost?

Georgine Steinmiller
Henderson State University
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Robert Steinmiller
Henderson State University
Arkadelphia, Arkansas

Terry Wallis
Peabody, Vanderbilt
Nashville, Tennessee

INCLUSION IN RURAL SCHOOLS: THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

One of the most popular phrases seen in public schools today is "we teach all children" or stated in slightly different words "all children can learn". We concur with the concept, but how do we really make it happen? As teachers of teachers, it is vital that we share with our future teachers theory and ideology, but also practical strategies that really work in today's classrooms. We also need role models and examples of successful teaching, especially of positive inclusion of children with special educational needs in general education settings.

Inclusion is a term that has been discussed often in recent years. For the purpose of this paper, we adhere to the Council for Exceptional Children policy on inclusive schools (CEC, 1993). The elements of inclusion are state nicely in Eleanor Guetzloe's 1999 article, "For students with disabilities, the most important elements of inclusion are attending the home school-the same school that neighbors, siblings, or nondisabled peers attend--and being placed in regular education classes (and included on the class rolls) with classmates of the same chronological age. At the same time inclusion means having (a) an individualized education program (IEP) as required by federal law and (b) supports (special education and related services) necessary for success in that environment."

At one of the meetings of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, the topic of "successful inclusion examples" was the focus of discussion. We realized that although we knew inclusion was occurring in Arkansas, we had not documented specific persons doing inclusion or examples of best practices. It was time to document who was doing successful inclusion and how they accomplished their goals.

In the spring of 2000, a research project was started to collect data about successful inclusionary practices in public schools in Arkansas. The first part of the research project was to send a letter to all the superintendents in the state requesting that they identify persons in their school district that were active in successful inclusionary practices. Our goal was to collect strategies and suggestions supporting inclusion and to document sites where positive inclusion could be observed.

Over three hundred letters were sent, one to each district. The letters were addressed to each superintendent. Included in each request was a self addressed stamped envelope and a form to submit names and addresses of persons successful teaching usi inclusionary practices. By May 2000, one hundred and sixty-eight names were returned.

In the Fall of 2000, a letter and questionnaire was sent to each of the persons recommended from the Spring 2000 request letter. As of November 2000, forty-four questionnaires had been returned. The questionnaires were divided into rural and urban schools. Suggestions from each were tabulated. (The lists of suggestions are included at the end of this document.) This report is based on those questionnaires. The focus will be on the recommendations made that support inclusion.

Best Practices

What are best practices for supporting inclusion? After reviewing the literature, collaboration, co-teaching, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, high expectations rise to the top of the list (Barry, 1995; Duchardt, et. al, 1999; Federico, 1999; Friend and Cook, 1992; Logan et al, 1995; Troen and Boles, 1994). It came as no surprise that these were also the ideas most listed in the questionnaires returned by the public school teachers. The majority of teachers use most of these techniques to support their inclusion.

The suggestions and strategies recommended by teachers in rural settings were compared to suggestions and strategies of teachers in urban settings. There were no discernable differences between the two. Both populations recommended co-teaching as the main teacher strategy, with the use of cooperative learning and peer tutoring supporting the inclusion. Having high expectations and working with all children was stressed in both urban and rural schools. Both strongly emphasized the need for appropriate faculty and staff development. The importance of really knowing one's students and working with them through their strengths was highlighted. Communication with parents, colleagues and students was an underlying theme throughout most of the questionnaires. Many reminded us of the importance of all children needing modifications and adaptations, so that they can learn to the best of their abilities. The specific modifications suggestions included word banks, extended time, multiple presentations, read tests to all students, correct speed of instruction, computer usage, modify length of assignment, note taking assistance, highlighting, and notebooks.

In the spring of 2001, the research will continue with teacher interviews. This will give us the opportunity to pin point more specific inclusionary tactics. During these interviews determining if there are any significant differences between urban and rural settings will be pursued.

Ultimately a list of teachers who will be great role models and have positive inclusion experience will be disseminated to all the teacher educators in the state. It will allow our future teachers across the state opportunities to observe positive models examples of inclusion.

Data Tabulations

RURAL

Peer tutoring xxxxxx
Peer buddies xx
High expectations xxxx
Required participation x
Concrete hands on activities xxxxx
Emphasize strengths xx
Open communication x
Stress organization (notebooks, trapper keepers, color coding, etc) xxx
Supportive adaptations and modifications xxxx
Positive discipline and behavior management plan x
Collaboration xxxxxx
Co-teaching xxxxxxxxx
Trial and error x
Staff and teacher development x
Word banks
Cooperative learning xxx
Multiple presentations of materials
Extended time
Believe that all students can learn in your class
Student needs driven classroom xx
Make modifications only when child is not succeeding x
Read tests to all students
Structure xx
Be an advocate
Be flexible xxx
Encourage club and afterschool activity participation
Teach in down times
Remediation activities revolve around general education frameworks
Shadowing x

Make child feel welcome
Go slowly x
Computer software
Age appropriate materials
Paraprofessionals
Manipulatives x
Get to know your children
Have fun

Urban

Organization (notebook, folder, etc) xxx
Co-teaching xxxxxxxxxxxxx
Visit successful inclusion sites xx
Faculty and staff development xxx
Note taking assistance xxx
Oral quizzes xx
Highlight texts x
Modify length assignments x
Monitor frustration level
Communication xxxx
High expectations xxxxxx
Available to all students xx
Co-planning time xxxxx
Don't single out
Cooperative learning groups xxxx
Test modification strategies xxxxx
Planning xxx
Interaction with parents xxx
Peer tutoring xxxxxx
Small groups xx
Manipulatives xx
Find out what works xx
Good teaching strategies xxx
Goal is to take student from point A to point B
Concrete and hands on xx
Assume success
Even general education students need modifications
Good sense of humor
Know your students xx
Develop network and support system
Support of administration xxx
Time
Be flexible xxxxxx
Help and modifications without watering down curriculum

References

Barry, Arlene (1995), Easing Into Inclusion Classrooms, Educational Leadership, Dec/Jan. 1995.

Chalmers, Lynne and Faliede, Theresa (1996), Successful Inclusion of Students With Mild/Moderate Disabilities in Rural Settings, Teaching Exceptional Children, Sept/Oct. 1996.

Council For Exceptional Children, Delegate Assembly Proceedings, 1993, San Antonio, Texas

Duchardt, B.; Marlow, L.; Innman, D.; Christensen, P.; and Reeves (1999), Collaboration and Co-teaching: General and Special Education Faculty, Clearing House, Jan/Feb, 1999.

Federico, M.; Herrold, Jr., W.; and Venn, J. (1999), Helpful Hints for Inclusion, Teaching Exceptional Children, Sept/Oct., 1999.

Friend, Marilyn and Cook, Lynne (1992) The New Mainstreaming, Instructor.

Guetzloe, Eleanor (1999) Inclusion The Broken Promise, Preventing School Failure, Spring 1999.

Halvorson, Ann and Neary, Thomas (2000), Building Inclusive Schools, Allyn and Bacon.

Hilliard III, Asa (1991), Do We Have the Will to Educate Al Children, Educational Leadership.

Logan, K.; Diaz, E.; Piperno, M.; Rankin, D.; McFarland, A.; and Bargamian, K. (1995), How Inclusion Built a Community of Learners, Educational Leadership, Dec/Jan 1995.

Rogers, Joy (1993), The Inclusion Revolution, Research Bulletin, Phi Delta Kappa, May 1993.

Troen, Vivian and Boles, Katherine (1994) No More Pull Outs, Creative Classroom.

James Burton
West Virginia University
POBox 6122
604B Allen Hall
Morgantown, WV 26506
EBDProject@aol.com

Gretchen Butera
West Virginia University
POBox 6122
606F Allen Hall
Morgantown, WV 26506
gdbutera@aol.com

INTEGRATED TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS: THE PARTICIPANTS RESPOND

Nationally, the demand for teachers of students with emotional/behavioral disorders is higher than any other category (ASCUS, 1994). Uncertified (along with vacant) teacher positions account for almost 20% of the national need for special education teachers (Eighteenth Annual Report to Congress, 1996). This could be a considerable reason why 66% of students with emotional / behavioral disorders are not receiving needed services (Guetzloe, 1997).

Currently, the E/BD teacher shortage in West Virginia is at a critical state. In 1998, the state director of special education identified teachers of students with EBD in rural inclusive settings as a priority. During that period, students with EBD were served by 210 teachers not certified in EBD (WVDOE, 1998). Over the past decade the turnover rate of all special education teachers in rural areas is about 3 years, with no data suggesting that this trend will change (Sullivan, 1997). Because of the lack of adequately trained EBD teacher and with the increasing number of students placed in inclusive education setting, this program focused on the training general educators to work with students with EBD in general education.

Traditional Program

The traditional categorical, NCATE-approved program at West Virginia University focuses on the preparation of educators who will work with students in resource room setting. Over the past five years, WVU has maintained an enrollment of approximately 800 students, with 200 of these students seeking certification in Behavior Disorders. Students in this program must successfully complete nine classes, two competency exams, and a practicum experience in order to obtain a Master's Degree and become certified in Behavior Disorders.

The program incorporates four courses, which address special education knowledge (Introduction to Special Education, Special Education Curriculum and Methods, Special Education Assessment, and Classroom / Behavior Management). Two courses which focus on behavior disorders (Introduction to Behavior Disorders and Teaching Strategies in Behavior Disorders) provide students with specific content knowledge for working with students in this population category. Classes in educational research, computer technology, and a culminating project, along with an elective comprise the classes for the traditional program. Courses may be taken in any order with the exception of the Culminating Project, which is the final course in the program.

Courses in the program are offered predominately on the Evansdale Campus at West Virginia University, in Morgantown. However, the basic knowledge courses are offered statewide on the educational satellite system on a rotating basis. Other courses are offered on an as needed basis at sites in Keyser, Wheeling, Parkersburg, and Charleston. Courses are offered in a 16-week semester during the Fall and Spring, and during one of two six-week summer sessions. Most courses have an average of 30 students in attendance, while satellite courses traditionally have an enrollment of over 100 students.

Students in the program must complete a practicum (student-teaching) placement in the area of certification. Practicum placements traditionally run during a single semester in the Fall or Spring. Placement during the Summer sessions is not currently available. The student-teacher will be assigned to either an eight or sixteen week placement in order to demonstrate mastery.

Integrated Program

The integrated program at WVU focuses on maintaining general educators in their current occupational setting. Educators who have been trained in a specific content area and can readily educate students with disabilities that are being "included" into their general education setting. Thirty educators were selected from a variety of teaching assignments that not only include core instructional areas like language arts, math, and science, but also include assignments such as creative arts, industrial arts, and physical education. Some individuals with experience as special educators were included in order assist their development of collaborative skills between special and general education. Participants in the project obtained both a Master's Degree in Special Education and credentials in Behavior Disorders.

Teachers in the program were required to complete nine courses, three web seminars, a practicum experience, and two competency exams. The program looks structurally similar to the traditional model. However, the makeup of each component is truly unique and vastly different from the traditional model. Components were molded to fit the specific needs of general educators, while providing information deemed necessary by NCATE.

The integrated program incorporated the four basic knowledge courses, two courses specific to instructing students with E/BD, and courses in education research, computer technology, and a culminating project. A uniquely designed leadership course was incorporated in the place of an elective for this project. In the four basic knowledge courses, teachers were given strategies for working with a student with E/BD without neglecting the other students in the educational setting. For example, in Special Education Assessment, teachers examined models of assessing students by using other than the traditional pencil-paper model. Teachers examined the effectiveness of this method on students with E/BD and students from the general population. In the "Classroom / Behavior Management" course, teachers worked on models of managing student behavior and classroom behaviors, not just those students with E/BD.

Within the courses that focus on E/BD, teachers obtained skills that would help all students in the general education setting. In the "Introduction to Behavior Disorders" class, teachers learned characteristics of E/BD, which assist in the identification of students for special services. In the "E/BD Teaching Strategies" course, participants obtained a variety of methods for instructing not only the student with emotional / behavior disorders, but also students with problematic behaviors. Courses in research design, computer technology, and culminating project were maintained in their current form.

In "Leadership for Planning School Wide Inclusion" students demonstrated their ability to promote change within their schools. Participants not only attempted to facilitate changes in teacher's attitude, but also to educate other faculty members, about inclusive practices. Most participants developed in-service training modules to facilitate the change process and to advance their own professional development.

Three web-based seminars served to be the most challenging for students and staff. Many students were uneasy about this non-traditional method for obtaining information and communication with others. With minimal technical assistance and technology uncertainty led to many anxious moments during each session of use. The sessions covered the topics of inclusive schooling issues and school teams, assessment and teaching strategies for use in inclusive classrooms, and inclusive schooling models.

In the project, teachers who that were employed in inclusive settings form a cohort who complete special education coursework together and work cooperatively on practicum requirements over an entire academic year. University supervisors for the Project visit practicum students in their schools. Supervisors conduct practicum seminars for members of the Project cohort, and maintain communication, which support collaboration among cohort members and with higher education personnel. Cohort members select and document participation in activities which foster professional development; technology use; parent/teacher communication; curriculum development, implementation, modification and adaptation; collaboration skills; and knowledge of community service agencies.

Participant Responses

This section will provide a brief overview of participants' responses about various topics in relation to project participation. Students responded to several questions at the end of the project during several focus group interviews. The following are just a few samples from various categories.

EBD Rural Inclusion Project (overview)

"I feel that there is strength in this (project) … You made us feel important and the cohort teachers really made me feel like if I had a question I could ask it." – JC (High School Co-teaching Specialist)

"Our very first meeting, there were so many of us and I was really nervous. I felt that because I didn't have any experience, that I wouldn't get to contribute much or (that) I wasn't going to be an important part. But over the year we've developed good professional working relationships." – MS (Elementary Art Instructor)

"I am really sad that it's over" – DG (Middle School Social Studies Teacher).

Practicum Sessions

"I got a lot out of our conversations. I was able to take the suggestion (from the University supervisor) and implement them immediately, rather than waiting." – CD (High School Social Studies Instructor)

"Lynn (a supervisor) and I established a mentoring type program and I feel that I really got a lot more out of that rather than somebody being real rigid." – TC (Kindergarten Teacher)

"I know you can only do so much in a time frame, but I thought that it was so nice to actually have to put them into practice. It was so nice to put this into effect." – JD (Middle School Math Specialist)

Required Courses

"There are so many different teaching styles used and we had a lot of instructors that were very personal and shared a lot of their experiences with us." – MM (First Grade Teacher)

"In teaching you are so isolated a lot of time and just seeing other people way of handling things is just more humanizing" – JM (Title 1 Instructor)

"Personally, they (the classes) have made me want to be an advocate for the students in my school." – SB (Middle School Math Teacher)

Overall, teachers responded positively to the program. Some inquire about addition training to further enhance professional skills. While others suggest providing other general educators with similar training.

References

ASCUS Annual. (1994). The job search handbook for educators. Evanston, IL: Association for School, College, and University Staffing, Inc.

Eighteenth Annual Report to Congress on The Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (1996). Washington, DC: Author.

Guetzlow, E. (1997). What's happening on the hill: It's not a good IDEA. Council for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances Newsletter 10 (5), 1, 4-8.

Sullivan, M.E. (1997). Stemming teacher turn-over in rural settings: A follow-up study. Hungtington, WV: West Virginia Graduate College.

West Virginia Department of Education (WVDOE). (1998). Comprehensive system of personnel development. Charleston, WV: Author.

H. Timothy Blum, M.S.
Middle School Teacher
University of Wyoming Lab School
P.O. Box 3374
Laramie, WY 82071-3374
307.766.2155
tblum@uwyo.edu

Laura R. Lipsett, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor/Coordinator
English Education
College of Education
University of Wyoming
P.O. Box 3374
Laramie, WY 82071-3374
307.766.6891
llipsett@uwyo.edu

Dorothy Jean Yocom, Ph.D.
Associate Professor/Chairperson
Special Education
College of Education
University of Wyoming
P.O. Box 3374
Laramie, WY 82071-3374
307.766.4033
djyocom@uwyo.edu

LITERATURE CIRCLES IN THE INCLUSION CLASSROOM: ADDRESSING INDIVIDUAL STUDENT NEEDS AND THE STANDARDS MOVEMENT

Inclusion and Standards

School districts across the United States are implementing inclusion programs at a rapid rate, and this remains a contentious policy reform in contemporary education (Daniels & Vaughn, 1999; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). Inclusive education is perceived as part of a larger agenda to unify school resources and integrate programs in ways to benefit all students in general education classrooms (Berres, Ferguson, & Knoblock, 1996; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Miles & Darling-Hammond, 1998). No official, single or universally-accepted definition of inclusion exists, it has come to be defined as the placement of children with disabilities in general education settings (Daniels & Vaughn, 1999).

Compounding the inclusion debate is the call for standards based curriculum. The standards based movement currently sweeping the nation has become a rallying point for those seeking improvement in academic achievement (Tucker & Codding, 1998). Classroom teachers grapple with the difficulty of designing curriculum which meets prescribed standards while at the same time being pulled between attending to student differences yet ensuring that all students demonstrate mastery (Tomlinson, 2000).

Reading Instruction and Student Diversity

With classrooms more diverse than ever, teachers may be less able to rely on special programs for the very students they feel least prepared to teach (Walmsley & Allington, 1995). No single method, program, or book will help accelerate the needs of all children or any subset of children, and establishing a balanced reading program that responds to individual students is complicated (Irvin, 1998; Ivey, 2000). Students with special needs have more difficulty comprehending what they read, due in part to a failure to read strategically and to monitor their own understanding of what is being read (Vaughn, Gersten & Chard, 2000).

The 1990s have been characterized by reading instruction that is delivered to the class as a whole, while flexible grouping has been advocated it is rarely observed (Radencich & McKay, 1995; Vaughn, Gersten & Chard, 2000). Just as whole-class teaching has become more prevalent, today's classrooms have become increasingly diverse, and increasing numbers of students with special needs receive their instruction for reading in the general education classroom. To accommodate the range of diversity, teachers must consider effective practices and procedures for enhancing the educational outcomes for students who often are achieving at several grade levels below their classmates. Alternative instructional grouping is one of several variables linked to effective instruction in reading (Vaughn, Gersten & Chard, 2000).

Classroom teachers have expressed concerns that regular education students may perceive accommodations for students with learning disabilities as unfair. However, most students recognize the accommodations made for students with special needs to be of value for all students (Klingner & Vaughn, 1999). Key in all these practices is interactive dialogue between students, and between teacher and students, this appears to be a critical component of effective interventions in reading (Vaughn, Gersten & Chard, 2000).

Literature Circles

The literature circle is a strategy of reading and literary engagement that promotes interactive dialogue. Literature circles come in many forms but essentially are small, temporary discussion groups that are reading the same story, poem, article or book with each member taking specific responsibilities during discussion (Daniels, 1994). Students independently read and prepare for discussion. Routines that offer alternatives to independent reading may be necessary to address the needs of struggling readers, taking the form of conversations and interaction with adults temporarily supporting the students in development of more complex thought and language (Bruner, 1978). Literature circles extend this strategy by providing structures that help students and teachers break away from typical classroom discussion patterns where students respond only to teacher probes (Brabhan & Villaume, 2000). Literature circles support students taking responsibility for developing and discussing their own questions and interpretations of texts (Burns, 1998).

With literature circles all students assume different roles assigned to them in advance, often completing a task organizer or simply noting ideas or questions as they read (Burns, 1998; Daniels, 1994). The discussion roles encourage readers to use successful reading strategies, making predictions, constructing visual images, creating connections to personal experiences and other texts, while reading for understanding. Literature circles build student control and ownership of the learning. Features of literature circles include student choice, mixed ability groups, student management of interactive groups, and time to read during the school day (Burns, 1998). As students monitor and access their skills as readers, the classroom climate may become more cooperative, responsible, and pleasurable, encouraging student's growth in reading (Daniels, 1994).

The literature circle strategy is one approach that general education teachers can employ to reach students who may not respond to practices that are more traditional. Most readers prefer working in mixed-ability groups and in mixed-ability pairs over whole-class instruction or individual work (Erlbaum, Schumm & Vaughn, 1997). Students perceive that in mixed ability groups they help one another more, learn more, and as a result enjoy being in the group more. The literature circle is one type of organizational pattern that promotes such mixed groups and sharing of literature and in turn promotes a positive classroom climate (Burns, 1998).

Literature circles can be part of changes to the existing curriculum and may be one potential approach for meeting all students' needs in the inclusion classroom, while addressing issues of standards based curriculum. In a curriculum based on standards, teachers must think about curriculum design in a different way. How the assignments help students meet standards becomes a key factor (Rogers, Guess, Robertson & Van Oast, 2000). Literature circles can address school district standards, which ask students to read a variety of grade-level materials, applying strategies appropriate to various situations (Albany County School District Standards, 2000). Literature circles allow discussion tasks to be adapted so each group member can receive support to read the text in active and reflective ways. This allows group members to come to the circle prepared to participate as a contributing member. The key is that all students need to believe that they are fully participating in the classroom community (Frederico, Herrold & Venn, 1999).

Classroom Research

Literature circles in the inclusion classroom provided all students with a role and a responsibility to contribute during the discussion. Initially, student roles, task organizers and the discussion process were modeled in teacher-selected groups of five to seven students. Students practiced their skills reading and analyzing literature with Dr. Seuss books and short stories, these selections allowed the entire literature circle process to reach completion in one language arts block session. The structure of the literature circles eventually evolved into groups that were determined by student-selected titles, allowing for choice and control of curriculum materials. The roles assigned to students in the literature circles were borrowed from Daniels (1994). Role assignments were given to students as a strategy, so they could read and analyze literature in manageable increments. The skills learned are needed to demonstrate mastery of content in the standards based curriculum.

From practicing with shorter selections, literature circles evolved into the use of novels. The novels were selected based on availability of multiple titles, diverse reading levels, and the ability to group the novels with an overriding theme connected to the social studies curriculum. In dealing with the Revolutionary War, students could read the factual content of the history, but had difficulty realizing the impact of revolution on the people. Literature circle books that fell under the topic of revolution included *The Forty-Third War*, *My Brother Sam Is Dead*, and *Cast Two Shadows*. The young adult books were selected to provide readers with insight into the impact of war on families and relationships. Students were provided with these three choices with the expectation that the book they selected would determine the members of the literature circle and would remain unchanged until the completion of that selection.

Discussions focused on the content of the reading but also extended into areas such as family relationships, and what happens when family members disagree. During the discussions students made a bridge from situations in the content reading to applications in their personal lives. When learning develops on intellectual as well as physical, emotional, aesthetic, moral and spiritual levels, connections are developed between the learner and the subject matter (Miller, 1999).

Findings

The use of literature circles in the classroom shifted the role of the classroom teacher to facilitator, while the students made choices, raised questions, discussed and constructed meaning. During discussions the classroom teacher and the educational specialists functioned as observers of the process, completing literature circle rubrics that measured student responses and participation. Adult supervision of the groups ensured that discussions would be more in depth and less superficial. The literature circle rubric included categories that identified student participation as well as small group behavior. The score assigned to students was based on a one to four scale, from non-proficient to advanced. The rubric also provided space for anecdotal notations that included student insights and connections to statements made by others.

Inclusion classrooms are successful when all students are perceived as valued participants and methodologies are perceived by students as being the same for everyone (Klingner & Vaughn, 1999). Literature circles offer a varied instructional approach that can serve the needs of a diverse classroom culture and provide students with the skills to address content standards. Literature circles offer all students an opportunity to succeed in the classroom. The varied tasks and the organizers provided helped focus the student attention to important elements of the reading. They provided the tools necessary to develop reading strategies for all students. Literature circles may be used in a variety of forms. The format described here is just one way to help students with special needs to become successful in a general education classroom where state and district standards must be met.

References

Albany County School District Standards. (2000). Language arts standards. Albany County School District. Laramie, Wyoming.

Berres, M. S., Ferguson, D. L., & Knoblock, P. (Eds.). (1996). *Creating tomorrow's schools today: Stories of inclusion, change, and renewal.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Brabham, E. G., & Villaume, S. K. (2000). Continuing conversations about literature circles. *The Reading Teacher, 54*(3), 278-280.

Bruner, J. (1978). The role of dialogue in language acquisition. In A. Sinclair, R. Jarvella, & W. Levelt (Eds.), *The child's conception of language* (pp. 241-256). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Burns, B. (1998). Changing the classroom climate with literature circles. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 42*(2), 124-129.

Daniels, H. (1994). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in the student-centered classroom.* York, ME: Stenhouse.

Daniels, V. I., & Vaughn, S. (1999). A tool to encourage best practice in full inclusion. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 31*(5), 48-55.

Elbaum, B., Schumm, J., & Vaughn, S. (1997). Urban middle-elementary students' perceptions of grouping formats for reading instruction. *The Elementary School Journal, 97*, 475-499.

Federico, M. A., Herrold, Jr., W. G., & Venn, J. (1999). Helpful tips for successful inclusion: A checklist for educators. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 32*(1), 76-82.

Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (1994). Inclusive schools movement and the radicalization of special education reform. *Exceptional Children, 60*, 294-309.

Irvin, J. L. (1998). *Reading and the middle school student: Strategies to enhance literacy* (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Ivey, G. (2000). Redesigning reading instruction. *Educational Leadership, 58*(1), 42-45.

Klingner, J. K. & Vaughn, S. (1999). Students' perceptions of instruction in inclusion classrooms: Implications for students with learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 66*(1), 23-37.

Lipsky, D., & Gartner, A. (1997). *Inclusion of school reform: Transforming America's classrooms.* Baltimore: Brookes.

McIntosh, R., Vaughn, S., Shumm, J. S., Haager, D., & Lee, O. (1994). Observations of students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms. *Exceptional Children, 60*, 249-261.

Miles, K. H., & Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Rethinking the allocation of teaching resources: Some lessons from high-performing schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 20*(1), 9-29.

Miller, J. P. (1999). Making connections through holistic learning. *Educational Leadership, 56*(4), 46-48.

Radencich, M. C., & McKay, L. J. (1995). *Flexible grouping for literacy in the elementary grades.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Rogers, S., Guess, J., Robertson, A., & Van Oast, B. (2000) Coaching for success another way to meet standards. *Middle Ground, 4*(2), 18-22.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2000) Reconcilable differences? Standards-based teaching and differentiation. *Educational Leadership*, 58(1), 5-11.

Tucker, M. S., & Codding, J. B. (1998). *Standards for our Schools.* San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.

U.S. Department of Education. (1995). Appendix A. In *Twentieth annual report to congress* (A-50). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Vaughn, S., Gersten, R., & Chard, D. J. (2000). The underlying message in LD intervention research: Findings from research syntheses. *Exceptional Children, 67*(1), 99-114.

Walmsley, S. A., & Allington, R. L. (1995). Redefining and reforming instructional support programs for at-risk students. In R. L. Allington & S. A. Walmsley (Eds.), No quick fix: Rethinking literacy programs in America's elementary schools (pp. 19-44). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Suzanne M. Martin, Ph.D
University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Carol Torrey, Ph.D.
Southeastern Louisiana University
Hammond, Louisiana

Sarah Al-Juraid
Southeastern Louisiana University
Hammond, Louisiana

PROJECT PREPARE: PREPARING TEACHERS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN RURAL LOUISIANA

Introduction

With each passing year, the number of teachers fully certified to teach students with disabilities decreases (For IDEA, many states rely on fewer teachers, 1998). Indeed, the U.S. Department of Education states that there is "convincing evidence of a national substantial chronic shortage of special education teachers who are *fully* certified in their positions. This evidence suggests that the number of graduates in special education teacher preparation programs is much too low to satisfy the need for *fully* certified teachers" (U.S. Department of Education, 1998, p. vi). The Department of Education studies indicate that this shortage of personnel fully certified to teach students with disabilities, both in quantity as well as in quality of personnel, is even greater in rural, inner city, and other poverty areas. The need for qualified teachers and educational accountability has been expressed by national education and governmental leaders (e.g., President Clinton's State of the Union Address, 1999). The past administration's intent to ensure a well-trained cadre of teachers to meet the needs of all students, including those with disabilities, was expressed clearly in the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA) in June, 1997.

The extent of the problem can be seen in Louisiana where the majority of students with high incidence disabilities receive educational services in special education settings where close to fifty percent of the teachers are not certified in the area in which they teach. To exacerbate the situation, Louisiana consistently reports a critical shortage of certified personnel trained to meet the specific needs of all special education students. Figures obtained from the State's Annual 1998 School Report indicated that in the 1996-97 school year, 47% of practicing special education teachers were not certified in the area(s) in which they were teaching, and 1997-1998 data showed 42% not certified. Shortages of certified special educators have forced school districts to hire non-certified teachers to fill vacancies. Most of these non-certified teachers have not had adequate training in best practices relating to the education of students with disabilities. (Student Information System, LADOE, 1998). In fact, in the 17th Annual Report to Congress (1995) and again in the 18th Annual Report to Congress (1996), Louisiana's data on inclusion placed them among the lowest five states in serving students with disabilities in general education settings. The 18th Annual Report (1996) stated that 43% of students nationally were served in general education classes, while 22.5% of Louisiana students were served in general education classes, which indicates a 7.5 increase in segregated class placement (Landrum, Denny, & Vannest, 1995). Figures indicated that 43% of Louisiana's special education population is served in self-contained (i.e., separate) classes, versus the national average of 23%. They further reported that while the percentage of inclusive regular education placements increased nationally by approximately 6%, Louisiana's percentage of general education placements actually decreased by 3%.

Factors contributing to this shortage of qualified special educators in Louisiana include low teacher salaries, annual attrition, annual increases in needed teaching positions and higher teacher preparation tuition costs (Times Picayune, 1998). Recently, in an effort to increase the numbers of certified special education teachers, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved the reduction of the number of courses required for certification in special education. Under new state guidelines, teachers with general education elementary and/or secondary certification are required to complete 18 to 21 semester hours of special education coursework to become certified in special education, depending on the area of certification sought. The amount and nature of coursework selected for the new certification program reflect the current need to move certified personnel into the classroom as quickly as possible. The issue is how to build high quality preparation programs around these limited time and coursework requirements.

The Project

The purpose of this two-year project is to increase the number of fully certified teachers in Jefferson Parish who will serve students with disabilities. The participants in the project will complete a one-year teacher certification program in special education concentrating on mild/moderate disabilities. Eight courses and a practicum with high quality mentor teachers will be required for completion of the one-year program and attainment of a teaching certificate in the area of mild/moderate disabilities. The project is a fast track, high quality, alternative certificate program in Mild/Moderate disabilities that attempts to meet the tremendous need for certified teachers in the area of Special Education in Louisiana. Various course delivery methods, such as weekend- college and Internet course delivery, allow participants to "learn while they earn." The mentor teacher component and the parent teacher component are crucial pieces of the program. Mentor teachers fully certified in the area of mild/moderate disabilities provide support and assistance to the project candidates. They are fully certified teachers in the area of mild/moderate disabilities. The mentor teacher's role is to provide information on teaching and assessment, observation of student behavior, practical classroom management strategies, curriculum materials, and problem solving to the project participants. They will assist the project candidates in the reflective journal activities and will provide support for them throughout the program. Additionally, these teachers will be the connection between the project candidates and the course faculty. The mentor teachers will be provided support and professional development opportunities by the university throughout the project by participating in seminar activities, working collaboratively with the project faculty, facilitating positive change in the candidate's classroom, and providing knowledge and experience to the candidates. Parents of students with mild/moderate disabilities will be considered an excellent source of information and will actively be recruited to participate as co-teachers in the certification coursework as well as active members on the Project Advisory Council.

Technology

An exciting aspect of Project Prepare was the use of technology to deliver the coursework as well as assist in streamlining the management of the program. Five laptop computers were purchased through the grant and given to the mentor teachers. Upon completion of the project the computers will stay with the mentor teachers' schools helping to alleviate the severe shortages of equipment these schools experience.
Each mentor teacher will have a laptop computer to complete their work when visiting the teachers at their schools. The communication among the mentor teachers, project participants and project coordinator has been greatly enhanced by the uses of the laptop computers.

Formative Evaluation

During March 2000 an outside evaluator was hired to visit the project, and interview the participants, faculty, mentor teachers, parent teachers and project administrators for year one. The project evaluator conducted the evaluation by: 1) reviewing the documents related to the project, i.e., the grant application, the grant brochure, participant application forms, mentor teachers application forms, interim project reports, and Advisory Council meeting minutes; and 2) engaging in a series of structured interviews and focus group meetings with the project's principle investigator, two part-time project staff members, two adjunct faculty members, one parent, five mentor teachers and fifteen participants.

Findings

Year One

Both qualitative and quantitative findings for year one will be discussed in the following areas: participants, delivery of coursework, collaboration between Jefferson Parish Public Schools and the university, mentor training, and parent participation. The project, which officially began in fall session not in summer session as the project principle investigator had designed, recruited participants from Jefferson Parish School System during late Spring and early Summer1999. The full cohort of 25 participants was never achieved and the project began with 18 cohort members initially enrolled. Several of the participants lacked the prerequisite score on the National Teacher Examination (NTE) making tuition reimbursement from the Louisiana State Department of Education difficult. Without tuition reimbursement, they could not enroll in the program. Although the participants were practicing teachers certified in the area of general education, they lack the prerequisite coursework for their teaching certificate in special education. This lack was due in many cases to the fact that the participants had been out of college for a long period of time. Coursework concerning new legislation about the education of students with disabilities was missing from their portfolios.

Findings concerning the delivery of the coursework were varied. The participants preferred the streamlined approach that was followed in the summer session, i.e., three weeks, half-day sessions for one course. Faculty enjoyed the freedom such a schedule provided but were concerned about the lack of time the participants would have to absorb the information. The distance education approach was tried on one introductory course. With approximately 75% of the coursework completed via computer, the course was evaluated to be a success. When working with a non-traditional group such as the cohort, the secret of success for the "computer course" seemed to lie in two factors: 1) providing instruction on the computer the first three class meetings; and 2) provide strong technical support for the participants and the instructor throughout the term. One of the positive side effects of this type of instruction was that the participants were very pleased to have developed some basic computer skills. The idea of offering a weekend course was explored with participants and instructors preferring all day Saturday to Friday night and Saturday morning. That approach will be tried in the future.

Findings concerning the collaboration between the University and the Jefferson Parish School Board also were evaluated. The faculty members interviewed stated that the collaborative effort was excellent. One faculty member added that the project had not only enhanced the skills of the cohort participants but also facilitated the collaboration among school board personnel enabling them to truly connect curriculum and instruction. Having the cohort participants actually teaching on site while attending classes was seen as a strength of the project and an outgrowth of the positive collaboration between the two organizations. One faculty member stated, "Having the participants in the classroom with real kids completing real IEPs is a tremendous strength." She added that having the cohort on sight provided tremendous insight into the daily operations of the parish.

The five mentor teachers had attended two three hour training session to help them prepare for their role as mentors. Each mentor was assigned three mentees as three participants dropped out of the program. The mentor teachers reported that working with three teachers was in itself challenging. Several project participants expressed concern as to the role of the mentor – specifically whether the mentor had evaluative powers. Once it was clarified that the mentors do not evaluate, the mentor piece of the project was seen as extremely helpful to the participants. The mentors expressed a need for more linkages between the specific content addressed in the participants' courses and the follow-up activities with the mentors. The mentors stated the ultimate test of their success would be the completion of the project by their mentees.

Additional findings indicated that one parent was designing resource material for the project while working with the faculty on incorporating the information into the project. She has contacted many valuable sources (e.g., National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities) for ideas that were assimilated in a guidebook format for the participants. The project principle investigator plans to continue working with this parent to explore other ways parent information can be incorporated into the project.

Meeting Standards

The quantitative aspect of the evaluation of this project is based on how well the participants were prepared in meeting the Council for Exceptional Children competencies included in their coursework. The sequence of course offerings is as follows in Table 1.:

TABLE 1.

Summer 1999	Fall 1999	Spring 2000	Summer 2000	Fall 2000	Spring 2001	Summer 2001
Cohort 1	SPED 600* SPED 608 SPED 664	Sped 641 SPED 603	Sped 662 SPED 663 SPED 697			
		Cohort 2 if funding is available will begin Summer	SPED 600* SPED 603 SPED 612	SPED 608 SPED 664	SPED 641 SPED 662	SPED 663 SPED 697

- Entrance Requirement

The following table shows the percentage of participants who felt competent/extremely competent upon completion of the course work. Not all courses were completed at the time of the evaluation in Table 2.

TABLE 2

SPED 600 – Introduction to Education of Individuals with Exceptionalities	71%
SPED 603 – Vocational Adjustment of Individuals with Exceptionalities	59%
SPED 608 – Evaluation of Individuals with Exceptionalities	76%
SPED 612 – Behavior Assessment and Intervention with Individuals with Exceptionalities	59%
SPED 641 – Practicum in Assessment and Evaluation of Individuals with Exceptionalities	59%
SPED 664 – Classroom Organization and Management for Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities	76%

In addition, the participants reported many examples of evidence of improvement in their teaching methods, styles, and delivery of instruction as a result of the coursework. They reported that they understood the responsibilities of their jobs better, that they were more proactive and positive in their teaching strategies when addressing problem behaviors, and that they identify and implement instructional accommodations according to the student's learning style.

Year Two

Year two of Project Prepare started late due to a change in the principal investigator for the project and due to resulting complications with state paperwork. Arrangements were made with the state to reorganize the project schedule for the cohort to begin in Fall 2000 and complete the program in Fall 2001. Thirty-six teachers were recruited to begin in August for the Fall semester; however, due to program requirements only ten participants were actually enrolled in coursework. Nine participants completed the first semester and enrolled in the stipulated coursework for the second semester. During this spring semester, four additional participants were added to the cohort. Most of the coursework was provided in Jefferson Parish, thus permitting easy geographical access to the course and facilitating generalization of university learning to the participants' classrooms. Additionally, one introductory course (SPED 600) was available via the Internet to interested project participants. Planning is underway for the summer coursework and the required internship to be offered in Jefferson Parish. The internship was provided on SLU's campus in Year 1; however, the participants request this in closer geographical proximity. It is possible that the participants will continue working with their own students in an extended school-year program offered through Jefferson-Parish.

Collaboration between Jefferson Parish and the university continues to be excellent. Staff from the parish school system are involved in the Advisory Council and in the teaching of coursework. This truly provided for continuous feedback on progress that the project participants are making in their classroom as well as in the coursework. Parents have been recruited from surrounding parishes to offer suggestions and improvement to the project. Unfortunately, the mentors that were a vital link to the classroom teachers and offered on-site suggestions for improvement, were not funded for Year two of this project.

Issues

While alternative certification routes provide opportunities for people from various educational backgrounds to become certified teachers, challenges are often present in the implementation of such programs. Project Prepare was no different in that it too faced many challenges. The program was a collaborative effort among a state university, a local school parish, and two offices in the state department of education. There was difficulty in coordinating the activities among all the groups involved. Most issues that arose were communication and information issues that over time were beginning to be corrected. A major issue in the project was participant retention. The participants had difficulty with the amount of coursework expected of them while they taught in the classroom and attempted to have a family life. The project began with 18 participants. By the second semester, 14 people we participating. By the third semester, 11 people were participating. In the summer, three courses were required in order to complete the certification requirements. Only 4 of the participants opted to complete the work that summer within the time limits oproposed in the grant. The remainder of the participants decided to wait and complete their internships in their own classrooms, thus completing the certification requirements by May of 2001, which is after the project completion date of Summer 2000. This issue was a problem due to the fact that the grant support for these individuals was for one year. Also, by not completing as projected the state still suffered from a tremendous number of uncertified teachers in the field of exceptional education.

Additional issues stemmed from logistical problems. The University was 50 miles north of the school parish. While some course delivery was through distance education means, most courses were offered on site in Jefferson Parish. Traveling to the site was a hardship on the faculty who taught the classes. The participants had difficulty getting to campus for advising, buying books, and meeting with faculty for assistance with coursework. Also, start-up challenges were present. The project principle investigator received word in May that the project was funded, but the University did not receive the funding officially until August. Some of the participants had been recruited and had enrolled in the required entry course (SPED 600) for the summer session. Reimbursement for the tuition paid by the participants for that first summer session was difficult to obtain and continued to be a consistent difficulty throughout the project. Initially, the project principle investigator believed the tuition reimbursement money for the project was in a separate account from the other teacher tuition reimbursement account and that the participants in the experimental project were not to be held to the same set of rules as all other teacher tuition exemption program. Both beliefs proved false and presented numerous challenges for the principle investigator and the participants. A conflict between the idea of a cohort and delivering the number of certified teachers promised in the grant application existed as well. The University felt having more participants, when faced with the high attrition rate the project had, would help alleviate the teacher shortage in the field of exceptional education. The state department of education wanted the cohort to remain pure for experimental purposes. The dilemma was solved when the state department of education did not provide the tuition exemption needed for the new recruits to the program.

Lessons Learned

While some may view the project as not fully successful due to the small number of participants who completed the project during year one, the lessons learned from it are most valuable. Year two is continuing although project staff were unable to make substantive changes to the project: we were unable to correct some of the issues that were encountered during year one. The challenges of coordinating four agencies, each with a large bureaucracy, can be daunting. The old adage, "Get it in writing", holds true under such circumstances. We learned early in the project to discover the decision-makers in each setting and to work with them when at all possible. We also learned that the timeline provided for completion of the coursework was too intense. The participants were unable to teach, have their families and go to school. A fast track approach may work in some situations but it did not work in Year one of Project Prepare. When beginning an alternative certification program one fact to remember is that there will be attrition from the program. Participant retention needs to be a top priority when designing a program. Incentives need to be in place for the participants. One incentive we had in place for Project Prepare was a participant stipend. The stipend was disallowed when the budget was approved. Additionally, the mentor teacher piece of the program should be in place at the beginning of the program so as to provide instant and constant support to the participants who are already teaching.

Issues with course delivery lead to more lessons learned. While we used technology for two courses and found it to be invaluable, the delivery of the course work was very labor intensive. When full time faculty are expected to be on campus for classes, committee work, meetings, and student advising it is very difficult for them to additionally teach a course 50 miles off campus. While the need is great to provide the coursework and practical experiences necessary to prepare high quality teachers, some consideration needs to be given to the additional workload such a program can add for all involved. As the participants said, and the faculty echoed, "There are only so many hours in the day".

One lesson learned, and maybe the most gratifying of all, was that participants did bond and enjoyed the comradeship of the cohort approach. Five of the participants had already reserved a hotel party room for their graduation night. One woman told us that she was the only person in her family to go to college and to be chosen for Project Prepare was a tremendous honor. Whether these individuals completed the project "on time" became irrelevant as we watched them grow as teachers. They were all far better prepared for students with disabilities after some coursework than they were when they started the project. Year two participants quickly bonded with their cohort. They enjoyed the camaraderie and assistance of each other, and relied on their cohort participants to brainstorm as issues arose.

In general, Year one participants seemed to be very pleased with the project. Comments such as: "It is wonderful that JP employees are teachers at SLU. This provides a direct link and a great working relationship". "The project has helped strengthen my teaching skills". "Project Prepare has enabled me to make a giant step toward becoming certified" lead us to believe the project was successful.

References

Clinton's State of the Union Address. (January 26, 1999). Washington, D.C.

For IDEA, many states rely on fewer teachers. (1998) Special Education Report, 24(2). Alexandria, VA: Capitol Publications, 6-7.

New Orleans tries again for Empowerment Zone Status. (1998). Times Picayune (October 20, 1998)

Landrum,T. J., Denny, R.K., & Vannest,K. (1995). Special education in Louisiana: Challenges for inclusive education. Paper presented at the 18th Annual Super conference on Special Education, March 1995, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Student Information System (1998) State Department of Education: Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Author

U. S. Department of Education. (1996) To assure the free and appropriate public education to all children with disabilities. Eighteenth annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Education (1997) To assure the free and appropriate education of all children with disabilities. Nineteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Education, (1998). Promising practices. New ways to improve teacher quality – September 1998. Available: http://www/e/.gov/pubs/Prom-Practice/chapter2.html

Nancy Harriman, Ph. D.
Denmark Elementary School
RFO #2
Box 51A
Denmark, ME 04022

RESPONSIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS: DEALING WITH THE TOUGH CASES IN SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS

An advantage of small, rural schools is that when a new student with special needs enrolls, the principal, classroom teacher and special education staff immediately initiate communication about the student. Other special service providers are soon brought into the communication loop and staff work together to obtain information from parents and previous schools. Few new students are "lost between the cracks'" in a school where every staff member supervises every student in the school at some time during the week in a classroom, on the playground, or in the cafeteria. However, a disadvantage of small, rural schools is that they usually have a limited range of services available onsite for students with intensive needs, who require more than "resource" support. How can small, rural schools respond effectively to implement programming for such students? In this monograph, philosophical approaches and situational strategies implemented successfully by staff at two small rural schools in northern New England will be shared. During the conference session, examples of the strategies and outcomes will be provided through a case (Figure 1-see next page).

Service Delivery in Small Rural Schools

According to state regulations for IDEA, resource class placement is defined as specialized instruction and support services for 21%-60% of a student's school day (Maine Special Education Team). Many small rural schools depend heavily on a flexible resource room model in which a resource teacher, often assisted by educational technicians, serves students for short periods of time either through pull-out services in the resource room or support in the general education classroom. To enable most students to reach their IEP goals and become independent learners, the "least restrictive environment" includes some combination of both types of services (pull-out & support in the regular classroom) (Schmidt & Harriman, 1998).

Students who require more than 60% of the day in a special setting, or an alternative curriculum in several domains, are the most difficult to program for adequately in small, rural schools. Often the availability of alternative day programs within a reasonable distance of the child's home is limited or non-existent. Likewise, there may only be one part-time or full-time special educator on staff in the school, limiting the different types of programs that can be offered daily. Thus, there is often more pressure on multidisciplinary teams to develop creative solutions to programming within the community school (Harriman, 1998).

Philosophical Approaches

Three approaches are important for assuring conditions under which a team can mobilize and successfully implement a program for a new student with intensive special needs. They include: a family focus, a data collection system, and adult support in the classroom.

Family focus

A family focused approach is based on two indisputable assumptions:

1.) families care about the well-being of their children
2.) families can expect school teams to help increase their ability to meet their children's developmental needs.

A family focused approach is characterized by mutual respect, choices, and active participation of parents/family members in team decision-making (National Center for Family-Centered Care, 1990). In public schools it is the responsibility of the principal to set the tone for a family focused approach. Direct service providers may ally with the student and disapprove of parental responses. The principal can remind colleagues that parents are doing the best they can and challenge educators to come up with resources/actions to enhance the family's strategies for supporting the child. Special educators can allow adequate time in team meetings or parent conferences for discussion of circumstances that are constraining the family's ability to support a student's learning outside of school. School staff can also facilitate a family's access to other community services via the school counselor or social worker.

In the case of students with intensive special needs, the family focused approach is particularly important. Often parents are struggling at home to cope with behavior management or skills for daily living. Family members may also be struggling with their own "special" medical, economic, or emotional needs. Connecting the family to additional resources beyond the school may alleviate some of the stress that is impacting the family as a whole. The goal is to "enable and empower families in a way that makes them more competent and better able to mobilize...intrafamily and extrafamily resources, which in turn promotes child, parent, and family functioning," (Dunst, Trivette & Deal, 1988, p. 3) Often, other agencies that the family becomes involved with also offer case management services which can significantly enhance the effects of school services.

It should be noted that a family focused approach is not a valid excuse for relinquishing responsibility for a student's progress at school. It is primarily educators' responsibility to provide a safe, positive learning environment for students while they are at school. It is primarily the parents' responsibility to provide a safe, positive, healthy environment for students all of the rest of the time. Judging or attributing blame for a student's difficulties usually is not productive. The extent to which educators and parents can constructively work in partnership, encourage each other, and access resources/information to help each other is directly related to a student's prognosis.

Data Collection

Systematic data collection is a well-established indicator of effective special education programs. In small, rural schools, many team members may have frequent opportunities to directly interact with a student. This may result in over-reliance on personal observations, perceptions, or opinions for making team decisions. Systematically recording data on a student's behavior, and adult responses to it, is crucial for assessing adequacy and effectiveness of intervention strategies (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bahr, 1990).

The more challenging the student, the more important it is to have reliable data sources to guide decisions. Conversely, the more challenging the student, the higher the demands on human resources just to maintain the student. When adult resources are stretched to the maximum providing constant supervision for the student and intensive case management demands, it is difficult to justify time spent passively collecting data, However, there are alternatives to the traditional objective observer's systematic recording of behavior. Behavioral/instructional interventions can be structured so that data collection on performance is an integral part of the process carried out by the teacher, counselor, or educational technician working with a student (Paris, et. al, 1992). Rating forms or checklists that can be completed at the end of each day by teachers or parents are another alternative. Anecdotal notes are also critical for later communication with case managers or family service workers with regard to crisis situations that may have occurred.

Adult Support in Classroom

When educational and behavioral support is primarily provided through pull-out services in a school, service providers tend to be extremely schedule bound. They also may not be as sensitive to the needs of newly enrolled students because they have limited opportunities to work directly in classrooms with teachers. When educational and behavioral support is primarily provided through a combination of pull-out and "inclusive" support in general education classrooms, support staff and teachers tend to quickly identify specific needs of newly enrolled students. If every classroom teacher in the school has some additional adult assistance, there is less apt to be lag time between enrollment and referral.

Figure 1. Building a Program for Jason, 9/00-1/01

DATA COLLECTION

9/99 Records of previous evaluations sought from Preschool Providers

10/99 Observations by principal & resource teacher

11/00 School counselor contacts Preschool Providers

11/99 Lead screening results obtained

12/99 –1/00 Psychoeducational Assessment

1/00 Start anecdotal notebook in office

2/00 Determine eligibility for Spec. Ed. (Emotionally Disabled

2/00 Daily behavior monitoring form initiated

3/00 Evaluation by pediatrician

3/00 Tracking of time-outs & duration

5/00 Evaluation by pediatric neurologist

10/00 Evaluation by Speech Therapist

FAMILY FOCUS

10/99 + Initial parent conference with teacher

+ Initiate school - home daily notes

11/99 Initial team meeting with family

12/00 + Help mother find childcare

12/00 + Resource teacher
1/00 establishes relationship with mother

2/00 Team Meeting
+ Provide 1-2-3- tape to parents
+ Daily behavior monitoring forms home

4/00 + Referral to Human Services

4/00 Team Meeting - mother and step father
+ Implement constructive contingency strategies home & school

4/00 + Community Concepts Caseworker assigned

12/00 +Parent conference, discuss move and custody change

12/00 + Initial contact with father about transition

1/01 + Facilitate counseling referral with father

1/01 + Attend transition PET with father

ADULT SUPPORT IN CLASSROOM

9/99 + Title I in K-2 multiage class (40 mins. day)

10/99 + Title I small group instruction for K students (2 hours day)

11/99 Instructional Support Team Referral

12/99 +Self-contained, small K class, portable classroom (3.25 hours day)

12/99 + School Counselor inclass (30 mins. week)

12/99 + Consultation/observation by Resource Teacher

2/00 + Ed. technician, (full K day, (3 hrs 45 mins)

9/00 + Resource Staff coteach (full day)

+ Resource room (1 hr day + time-out as needed)

10/00 + School Counselor play therapy (30 mins. week)

11/00 + Articulation therapy (60 mins. per week)

1/01 Transition Team in new school agrees to continue full time support

The adult support in the classroom can be from a special educator, Title I assistant, a language specialist, or other professional. The role expectations for adult support in the classroom are also important. Cook & Friend describe several configurations for coteaching by classroom teachers and special services staff. In the most commonly used, "one teach, one support" the classroom teacher leads instruction in the class and the additional adult circulates assisting students individually as needed. However, other configurations fit many classrooms, also. Station teaching, in which different adults are assigned to small groups throughout the room works well in primary classrooms with learning centers or during reading instruction. Parallel teaching, in which the teacher and another adult divide the class to each teach the same lesson at the same time to half the students works well in multigrade classrooms.

Regardless of the configuration used, communication between the classroom teacher and the special services support person is essential. Sharing observations of students' patterns of learning and rate of progress facilitates timely referrals/modifications in programming. Ongoing communication and collaboration can also provide important emotional support for the classroom teacher who is trying to cope with the demands posed by a student with intensive special needs (Thousand, & Villa, 1992). Last, when more than one adult is present in the classroom, the impact of an individual student's behavior on the entire class can be more easily mitigated.

In combination, these three philosophical approaches can equip a small, rural school with the capacity to accommodate the needs of a student with intensive special needs without seriously compromising the educational service system for other students. In a practical sense this includes:

orient staff to approach their interactions with parents, including those of new enrollees, in a family focused manner;

work with special education, title I staff, and classroom teachers to develop efficient, simple record-keeping procedures for documenting student behavior and progress

provide all support services (special education, compensatory education, migrant education, speech & language services, occupational therapy services, etc.) through a combination of pull-out and in-class support, as appropriate, in order to increase the number of adults present in classrooms throughout the school day.

Situational Strategies

These three approaches provide a foundation, but there are also some specific strategies that are important in providing effective programming for students with intensive needs in small, rural schools. The reference to "situational" strategies is an acknowledgement that the effectiveness of these strategies is dependent upon situational factors that vary from school to school, and over time within a school. Situational factors include personnel, financial factors, the physical plant of the school, and the pre-existing culture/climate in a school. All of these strategies warrant consideration, but the best method of implementing each will require judgement by professionals who can objectively evaluate the situations unique to their school. Recommended strategies include:

enlist the active support of the principal
allocate staff time for extensive case management
cite safety issues to leverage resources
provide flexibility in staff scheduling
provide explicit training/staff development in appropriate strategies
invest in transition to the student's next school.

The active support of the principal is important for several reasons. First, keeping the principal in the loop allows her/him to apprise other administrators of the case as it develops. This communication alerts them that in advance of possible resource issues. Also, administrators appreciate having some background knowledge of a case when parents go to the principal or beyond the building level to express their concerns. Within the school, the principal is an important leader in setting a positive tone toward the student and his/her family. Listening to staff concerns and working with staff as a team to frequently evaluate the success of strategies – and capacity of the school to provide adequate support for the student is a time consuming but important process. The teachers providing direct service need reassurance that their efforts are paying off when progress is evident - or help generating new strategies when it is not.

Additional case management time must be allocated for the special educator and classroom teacher or others who are heavily involved with the case. Likewise, staff should be encouraged to build schedules with enough flexibility to handle the frequent crises or added meetings that may be required to serve the student with intensive special needs. Time should also be allocated for onsite staff development, including explicit strategy training with modeling and practice. The principal can facilitate this through reallocation of staffing, scheduling, or additional resources. Sometimes something as simple as providing half day substitutes periodically can be useful. It is a tangible signal that the principal recognizes the extra demands being placed on staff.

All of these strategies are intermediate steps as an appropriate level of staffing and programming is determined. While mindful of the legal requirements of IDEA, sometimes special educators and administrators are reluctant to recommend additional staffing or services specifically for one student in a small school/community. The cost may seem out of proportion to the overall budget or the scale of services provided for other students. It's important to remember that the learning environment for all students in the school is at stake, also. In the case of a student with intensive special needs, often behavioral support is an important part of the program. Students' safety and the ability of staff to adequately serve all students are convincing arguments in justifying new staffing and program expenses.

Another frustration educators frequently encounter is mobility. Sometimes it seems that just as a student's program is fully implemented and the student is starting to make consistent progress, s/he moves again. Given the amount of time and energy that has been invested in developing an appropriate individual plan for the student, sending a staff member to a transition team meeting, or arranging for participation via a conference call, can be a worthwhile investment. Written records provide some history and documentation, but an educator who has worked directly with the student can listen to the concerns and questions of professionals at the new school, and share specific strategies, suggestions, and rationale for program decisions.

Summary

A strong team effort in a small school can accomplish a lot for a student and his/her family in a short time. This is significant, as students with intensive needs who enroll in rural schools as transfer students mid-year are likely to move again. Investments that increase a student's ability to interact constructively in a classroom environment can be generalized to a new school setting. If the team is also able to increase the family's awareness of the student's learning needs and how to better meet them, that knowledge or the services that have been accessed can also transfer to a new setting.

References

Maine Department of Education Special Services Team. Maine Special Education Regulations, Chapter 101. Maine Department of Education. Augusta, Maine.

Dunst, C. J. , Trivette, C. M., & Deal, A. G. (1988). A social systems perspective of empowerment. In Enabling and empowering families: Principles and guidelines for practice.

Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S., & Bahr, M. W. (1990). Mainstream assistance teams: A scientific basis for the art of consultation. Exceptional Children, 57(2), 128-139.

Harriman, N. (1998). Inclusive teaching in rural schools: Expanding on tradition. Rural Special Education Quarterly,17(1), 21-27.

National Center for Family-Centered Care. (1990). What is family-centered care? Washington, DC: Assoc. for the Care of Children's Health.

Paris, S., Calfee, R., Filby, N., Hiebert, E., Pearson, P.D., Valencia, S. & Wolf, K. (1992). A framework for authentic literacy assessment. The Reading Teacher, 46, 88-98.

Schmidt, M., & Harriman, N. (1998). Teaching strategies for inclusive schools: Schools, students, strategies, success. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.

Thousand, J. & Villa, R. (1992). Collaborative teams: A powerful tool in school restructuring. In R.P.Villa, J.S.Thousand, W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds), Restructuring for caring and effective education: An administrative guide to creating heterogeneous schools (pp. 73-108). Baltimore: Paul Brookes.

Gaye Luna
Catherine Medina
Northern Arizona University
Center for Excellence in Education
Box 5774
Flagstaff, AZ 86011-5774

RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AS CAREGIVERS: VOICES OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Special education students often have not been successful, are not well adjusted, and have had lifelong problems or enough baggage to make them, as some teachers say, "the most difficult students to teach." With these factors and this description, how do teachers make meaning in the classroom environment with these students? And what is it about the teaching-learning experience that makes a difference to these children?

Teachers *as caregivers* are in the forefront to be rich and powerful resources for children who feel frustrated, helpless, and angry. As noted by Deiro (1996), "Children value adults who value them. Thus children who are living in seemingly intolerable situations but have a prosocial adult outside their home environment who cares about them will adjust their behavior to carefully safeguard that relationship" (pp. 3-4). Noddings (1984) stresses that student-teacher relationships provide a rich arena in which students are transformed by an ethic of care.

A qualitative study explored teacher-student relationships in classrooms for adolescents identified as emotionally disturbed/behaviorally disordered. These students exhibited one or more of the following behaviors:

> behavior disorders over a long period of time which adversely affect educational performance;
> an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
> an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
> inappropriate types of behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances;
> a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; and/or
> a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. (Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975)

In a mental health report entitled "Mad, Bad, Sad, and Can't Add" (Friedman & Kutash, 1986), many students identified as emotionally/behaviorally disabled were found to exhibit disengagement from their teachers and school environment. However, research has shown that the dropout rate and poor academic performance of these students can be improved through supportive and positive classroom environments. This includes increasing self-esteem and promoting positive attitudes through the facilitative environmental characteristics of trust, acceptance, and respect (see, e.g., Conant, 1992; Good & Brophy, 1997; Skooglund, 1997; Wooten &McCroskey, 1996). Morse (1996) found those teachers who successfully work with socioemotionally impaired students have the underlying attribute of caring deeply about their students. Moreover, Morse (1996) reminded us:

> It is not enough for a teacher to feel that he or she is a caring professional. Most of us believe we are. The task is to communicate our caring to the youngster so that she or he feels cared about. There is obviously no single way to establish such a bond of trust. Those "exemplar" teachers each achieved this in a unique mode, just as caring parents demonstrate their care in various ways. (p. 108)

Maily (1975) stated that a child-centered orientation to teaching is crucial when working with students identified as emotionally/behaviorally disabled. Teacher qualities for these students may be instrumental in determining student attitudes toward placement and the quality of intervention services. Teacher empathy or understanding is a valued teacher characteristic most often mentioned by the students. Morse (1996) contended that exemplary teachers of students with emotional/behavioral disabilities are those who knew their students and had empathy for the extreme stress in their lives.

Morgan and Reinhart (1991), who have written extensively in the area of teacher empathy, defined teacher empathy as the "teacher's understanding of the meaning to the student of the classroom experiences in which they are mutually engaged" (p. 33). In essence, empathy means caring about the student and seeking to understand that student from his or her own frame of reference. Morgan and Reinhart also articulated the need for empathetic teachers in classrooms for children with emotional disabilities:

> Empathy is critical to good teaching, especially to teaching emotionally disturbed/ behaviorally disordered students. We work with youngsters who perceive their worlds differently than most people do. Teachers who work with these children must have insight and understanding. Empathy provides the ability to know the students' world in the way that they live it, to interpret that understanding back to the child, and then provide boundaries of reality so that they may function more competently. (1991, p. 340)

Hearing Teacher and Student Voices

Qualitative research requires that the researcher examines and attempts to understand human behavior in its social context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This type of research captures participants in their own terms--their emotions, the way in which they view their worlds, their thoughts on their experiences, and their perceptions and values (see, e.g., Geertz, 1973).

Seidman's In-depth Phenomenological Interviewing procedures were utilized to help understand teacher-student relationships for rural students enrolled in programs for emotional/behavioral disabilities. In-depth interviewing is a vehicle in which to access abstract and complex social and educational issues and place them in a very realistic and concrete framework (Seidman, 1991). In this case, it allowed these researchers to hear voices of teachers and students. This model of interviewing involved three 45- or 90-minute interviews with each participant (students 45 minutes and teachers 90 minutes). The first interview focused on the historical background of the participants as it related to what events led to their placement or teaching in special education. The second interview focused on the present-day experiences in special education. The third interview asked the participants to reflect on the *meaning* of their experiences in special education.

Participants were five Mexican-American adolescents (ages 12-18) enrolled in southwestern rural public school special education classes that met the state and federal guidelines for placement in programs for emotional/behavioral disabilities. All students participating in this study were in a self-contained classroom for at least one period a day, with most in a self-contained classroom for the majority of the day. One special education teacher from each of the four selected classrooms was also asked to participate in this study by being interviewed. A tape-recorder was utilized during each of the interviews. All three interviews took place approximately one week apart over a three-month period.

Experiences shared by the students and teachers interviewed each portray a different story. Yet, the caregiving qualities of teachers connected these students to education and made meaning in the lives of adolescents. As Benard (1995) pointed out, "An ethic of caring is obviously not a program, or strategy, per se, but rather a way of being in the world, a way of relating to youth . . . that conveys compassion, understanding, respect, and interest." These teachers believed that caregiving was one of their primary roles as a teacher. This supported Brophy and Evertson's (1976) finding that "teachers' role definitions for themselves… [are] among the most fundamental teacher characteristics associated with teaching success" (p. 141). Robert Bloom (1983) stated:

> Time and again, positively and negatively, the emotional generators of our adult professional personalities are energized by the youngsters we teach and the circumstances in which we teach them. Refusal to recognize the emotional impact students have upon us and how that affects our professional work impairs our ability to establish rapport with youths, limits our instructional effectiveness, and establishes us as prime candidates for the despair and depression of teacher burnout. Accepting special education's interpersonal underworld allows us to disengage from unproductive conflicts, to forego battles with windmills in exchange for struggles with real dragons, and as a marvelous extra, to continue to grow as teachers and as human beings. (p. 215)

Teacher Voices

Though human behavior is complex and qualitative research can generate multiple interpretations and realities, the words of participants provide the meaning to life that is often missing with quantitative data. Hearing teachers' voices allows others to understand their experiences from a social, cultural, and educational context. The voices of four teachers who worked with and taught rural students with emotional/behavioral disabilities are summarized. Each summary expresses the teacher's philosophy about caregiving in his/her special education classroom.

Ms. Dee: Teacher of Pablo

Ms. Dee is an African-American teacher, age range 31-40, who holds a bachelor's degree. She has been a special education teacher for approximately 10 years. Her background includes six years of working with students who have specific learning disabilities and four years of working with children identified as emotionally disturbed/behaviorally disordered. She served eight students in her class, seven Mexican-American males and one Euro-American male. Pablo was the student interviewed from her class. It is important to express the positive attitudes that Ms. Dee had about Pablo. Ms. Dee had effectively identified not only Pablo's weaknesses but also his strengths. One can sense that Ms. Dee was not only interested in Pablo from an academic perspective, but she tried to understand him in a more intimate manner. She reflected the care and high regard she holds for her students. She clearly stated that her classroom is a transitory setting where students learn the skills needed to move into general education.

Ms. Johnson: Teacher of Angela and Jaime

Ms. Johnson is Euro-American teacher, age range 41-50, who has a Master's degree in Education. She has 12-15 years of special education experience. In addition, she has approximately nine years of social service experience. She currently serves 6-10 students identified as emotionally disturbed/behaviorally disordered. All of her students are identified as Mexican-American. She has one female in her class. She noted her special relationship with each student saying, "It's a relationship thing that develops as you spend time with that child. It is like surrogate parenting, but I look at it more like human interaction with the human relationship."

Ms. Davidson: Teacher of Thomas

Ms. Davidson is an African-American special education teacher who has been working in the field of education for approximately 25 years. She currently holds a Master's degree. At present she serves eight students. Six are identified as Mexican-American, and two are identified as African-American. Ms. Davidson indicated that she felt five of her students had used or abused drugs or alcohol within the current academic year. Ms. Davidson, like Ms. Dee and Ms. Johnson, valued her students and believed that the teacher-student relationship is imperative to student improvement. She viewed student histories not as barriers but rather as points of acceptance, where she saw the adolescents she teaches as human beings with needs.

Mr. Leonard: Teacher of David

Mr. Leonard is an African-American male, age range 41-50, who has been a special education teacher for approximately 4-6 years. He served 6-10 students, 50% of which are Mexican-American and 50% of which are Euro-American, all of which are in classrooms for adolescents identified as emotionally/behaviorally disabled. For students who have felt rejected by virtually all significant adults, Mr. Leonard listened to them without judgment and accusations, producing profound transformation in his students.

From the complete teacher interviews, one was made aware of the unique relationships that students have with their teachers. The teacher-student relationship consisted of academic help, but, as importantly, it also consisted of being available to listen to the adolescent, empathizing with the adolescent, providing boundaries for the adolescent, and offering advice when necessary. All special education teachers as caregivers appeared to place a very high priority on relational issues with the students.

Student Voices

In the teacher interviews, educators verbalized a desire to connect with their students on a personal level and saw these personal connections as the necessary ingredient toward a student's positive transformation in the school community. These special education teachers indicated that they spent a significant amount of time engaged with their students and saw part of their teacher role as developing a healthy relationship with their students. With student voices, one saw that the meaningful connections in the student-teacher relationship were established through caregiving qualities of teachers.

Pablo: Student of Ms. Dee

Pablo is a 13-year-old student who is in a self-contained program for students with emotional/behavioral problems. According to Pablo, his problems started immediately prior to the fourth grade and stemmed from the death of his grandfather, the accusations made by his family that he had "killed" his grandfather, and the relentless teasing he received about the death of his grandfather. Pablo also chronicled his own depressive behaviors, which were masked by anger, violence, and aggression. At school Pablo saw himself as aggressive and the school system as unjust and differential in its treatment of students. When asked about his current school life, Pablo stated, "I feel much better . . . way much better." In fact, what one saw was Pablo becoming engaged in the school process and feeling valued. Although Pablo had some behavioral problems in his placement, Pablo viewed the school as a social arena in which he felt integrated.

Jaime: Student of Ms. Johnson

Jaime is a 14-year-old student enrolled in a self-contained class for students with behavioral and emotional problems. He had been in the program for approximately three months. Ordered by the courts and with the recommendation from mental health personnel, Jaime was enrolled in this school program as part of his rehabilitation. Jaime had a history of juvenile delinquency, psychiatric hospitalization, and severe family distress. Like Pablo, Jaime felt alienated from the school environment until entry into special education. Interestingly, Jaime readily articulated that he had a friendship with his teacher and that she genuinely cared for him.

Angela: Student of Ms. Johnson

Angela is a 14-year-old adolescent who attempted suicide because she felt that she would be "one less problem for her mother." Angela saw her placement in special education as therapeutic and beneficial. She verbalized great appreciation for the professionals who helped find the most appropriate placement for her. Although Angela was afraid to enter her new school, her special education teacher, Ms. Johnson, and the educational assistant Mr. Valdez, valued Angela as an individual. Angela suffered from anxiety, depression, and feelings of apprehension, but she nonetheless found a safety net in special education.

Thomas: Student of Ms. Davidson

Thomas is a 14-year-old eighth grade student who had a history of juvenile delinquency and repeated school failure. Thomas saw the special education classroom as a place where he could receive the academic and psychological help he needed. He said that he was learning how to read and write and that his math skills continued to improve. Also important was his feeling that his special education teacher "explained" lessons to him and that she helped him more than the general education teachers. Student and teacher relational issues appeared to be an important element in his success. Like Pablo and Jaime, Thomas addressed the issue of a teacher being someone who is genuinely concerned about students, emotionally as well as academically.

David: Student of Mr. Leonard

David is an 18-year-old adolescent who has been in classes for behavior/emotional problems throughout his high school years. David was placed into a special education program following an attempted suicide and psychiatric hospitalization. One could sense that his successful intervention may have been partly due to the relationship he had with his teacher. Like the other students, David looked to the special education teacher not only as a person who teaches academics but also as a person he could respect and in whom he could confide. In return, his special education teacher was interested in David on a personal level.

Reflecting On The Voices

It is important to examine how the social systems in which students find themselves impede or promote a healing process. What is the role played by the school in augmenting or abating positive and negative behaviors?

The special education programs were therapeutic for the adolescents in this study, while other programs may exacerbate negative feelings within the adolescent at-risk for emotional degeneration. What appears to be crucial for these students were (a) the relationship they had with their teachers, (b) the feeling that they were valued by the teacher and/or school community, and (c) the belief that their placement into special education was intended to be restorative, rather than punitive.

The teacher appeared to be of utmost importance when working with students identified as emotionally/behaviorally disabled. All students interviewed spoke about or provided examples that demonstrated teacher caregiving qualities that were important to them. What appeared to be pertinent in each of the full student narratives was the need for a student-teacher relationship that was based on empathy and unconditional positive regard.

Pablo, who had been in special education for nine months, provided examples, which demonstrated his integration into the school community. Pablo felt valued in his special education classroom, and he said that he was doing much better at his new school. This was remarkable considering that Pablo had a long-term history of aggression, violence, depression, and school failure.

Jaime felt that special education provided him with an opportunity for positive change. Jaime attributed his success, in part, to his teacher and the instructional assistant. He felt that his teacher understood him, listened to him, and befriended him without judgment.

Angela, like Jaime and Pablo, felt that special education placement had been enormously beneficial on both an academic and emotional level. For Angela, who spent the past three years avoiding the school environment, the fact that she came to school daily was important. Much of her progress was attributed to her teacher and the instructional assistant. She believed that both individuals genuinely care for her and were empathetic to her needs and experiences. This was instrumental to her positive development.

Thomas had been in special education for approximately three years and saw special education as an arena where he was learning new skills and receiving needed emotional help. Thomas felt that he had a teacher who finally explained things. For Thomas, who stated that he had not had many positive experiences with teachers, this teacher's understanding lessened his own anxiety and increased his own feeling of self-worth.

David had also been in special education on a long-term basis for approximately four years. David saw his special education program as an integral part of his own emotional-psychological development. David stated that his teacher supported him completely and was a trusted confidant. In fact, David provided examples where he talked to his teacher about personal problems, and his teacher offered him advice and a listening ear. For David, who experienced a past of drugs and alcohol, an attempted suicide, emotional abandonment, and inconsistent parenting, the fact that he had established a trusting relationship with an adult was encouraging.

For the majority of adolescents interviewed, special education not only provided the students an individualized academic program but also an opportunity to form meaningful relationships with an adult in a healthy and nonthreatening manner. This may be the first healthy relationship based on respect and genuineness that these adolescents had experienced. When asked about their special education program, the majority of the students didn't want to talk about "what" they did all day, but rather they chose to talk about their relationships with other individuals within their classrooms, with the majority of their conversations focused on the caregiving of their teachers.

The interviews point specifically to the importance of teachers as caregivers. Caregiving qualities are critical in student-teacher relationships. Perhaps, the student-teacher relationship provides a lifeline of hope for these students, who, in the past, have felt that no adults really cared for them.

References

Benard, B. (1995). Fostering resilience in children. (ERIC Document Reproduction No. 386 327)

Bloom, R. B. (1983). Why that one? Some thoughts about instructional competencies for teachers of emotionally disturbed adolescents: Content for programs. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Department of Psychoeducational Studies.

Brophy, J. E., & Evertson, C.M. (1976). Learning from teaching: A developmental perspective. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Conant, L. (1992). Characteristics of facilitative learning environments for students at risk. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 346 421)

Deiro, J.A. (1996). Teaching with heart: Making healthy connections with students. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Education of all Handicapped Children Act of 1975, P.L. 94-142, 89 Stat. 773.

Friedman, R.M., & Kutash, K. (1986). Mad, bad, sad, can't add? Florida Adolescent and Child Treatment Study. Tampa: Florida Mental Health Institute.

Geertz, C. (1973). The interpretations of cultures. New York: Basic Books.

Good, T.L., & Brophy, J.E. (1997). Looking in classrooms. New York: Longman.

Lincoln, S.Y., & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Maily, B.L. (1975). School liaison and field services. In M.M. Wood (Ed). Developmental Therapy. Baltimore, Maryland: University Park Press.

Morgan, S.R., & Reinhart, J.A. (1991). Interventions for students with emotional disturbances. Austin, TX: PRO-ED, Inc.

Morse, W.C. (1996). The role of caring in teaching children with behavior problems. In N.J Long & W.C. Morse (Eds). Conflicts in the classroom: The education of at-risk and troubled students (pp. 106-113). Austin, TX: PRO-ED, Inc.

Noddings, N. (1984). Caring: A feminine approach to ethics & moral education. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Skooglund, L. (1997). Respect begets respect and other lessons form project breakaway. Reaching Today's Youth: The Community Circle of Caring Journal, 1(2), 15-17.

Seidman, I.E. (1991). Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social science. New York: Teachers College Press.

Wooten, A. & McCroskey, J. (1996). Student trust of teacher as a function of socio-communicative style of teacher and socio-communicative orientation of student. Communication Research Reports, 13(1), 94-100.

Full text of this qualitative study is published as: Medina, C., & Luna, G. (1999). Teacher as caregiver: Making meaning with students in emotional/behavioral disabilities. Teacher Development, 3(3), 449-465.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Early Childhood

Noranne Yeager, Ph.D.
Chadron State College
207 Hildreth Hall
Chadron, NE 69337

Kim Madsen, Ed.D
Chadron State College
217 Burkhiser
Chadron, NE 69337

THE BIG MERGE ...EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Introduction

The demands for improved pre-service personnel preparation at the national level have intensified as states work to implement the early childhood legislative initiatives PL 99-457. This law, passed in 1986, extended requirements of the special education rules and regulations to include children with disabilities birth to three years of age. Institutions of Higher Education were key players in preparing personnel across disciplines to serve young children with and without disabilities and their families across all community and school settings. Likewise, many special educators who provided early childhood services to families and infants needed to have knowledge about normal childhood development in order to address transitional needs of children enrolling in preschools, Head Start or other child care and school programs. Therefore, an early childhood education endorsement, which prepares personnel in the knowledge of child development, early childhood education, and developmental delays and/or disabilities is essential.

Background of Grant Project:

In April of 1998, the Nebraska Department of Education in collaboration with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services received federal funds to implement S.C.R.I.P.T ($upporting Change and Reform in Interdisciplinary Personnel Training) projects within the state.

A group of 32 stakeholders, including Higher Education faculty (4 year and 2 year), families, practitioners, administrators and state agency personnel, identified the following priorities for Early Childhood (EC) and Early Intervention (EI) pre-service personnel preparation in Nebraska as:

1. Increase interdisciplinary planning and teaching of EC/EI content
2. Increase quality and diversity of practical experiences for students
3. Assist faculty in addressing early intervention philosophies and competencies in all pre-service training, and
4. Assist training institutions to plan, develop and implement the new unified early childhood teaching endorsement for educators of young children birth through eight years of age (Nebraska S.C.R.I.P.T, 2000).

P.U.R.E. (Panhandle Unified Rural Education) Project:

The goal for the Panhandle Unified Rural Education project at Chadron State College is to create an educational endorsement program unifying course offerings in the early childhood and special education programs at Chadron State College and Western Nebraska Community College. The endorsement will provide the workforce well qualified early childhood educators who will be prepared to meet the needs of diverse populations of children and families. The following schematic map identifies a visualization of the partners involved in the process of the grant.

P.U.R.E. Project : Year One

The first year of the grant project focused on the following objectives:

1. To survey current students and former graduates in the Early Childhood Education and Special Education endorsed with elementary education,
2. To gain input on pre-service and in-service training needs from focus groups consisting of parents, practitioners, administrators, educators, students and providers, and
3. To collaborate with colleagues (stakeholders) from Education/Special Education and Early Childhood/Family & Consumer Sciences departments at Chadron State College and Western Nebraska Community College.

Objective 1:

The survey was taken by current and former students in Elementary Education with endorsements in Early Childhood Education and Special Education. It asked for viewpoints regarding:

- satisfaction with current program offerings
- time courses were offered
- locations where courses were offered
- accessibility to resources
- level of preparation they had entering chosen profession
- current course/training content
- topics of interest/need for further training or education
- desire to become actively involved in revision of current programs and course content

From the results of the survey, the Special Education faculty considered scheduling classes at more convenient times such as during the day for working students and parents, and late afternoon or evening classes for full-time working professionals. The faculty in Family and Consumer Sciences reviewed scheduling options of courses and continue to search for more convenient times for course offerings as well as adding more sections and adjunct faculty to accommodate large student enrolled classes.

Another area that was rated lower for both programs was accessibility to resources. The library funding for new special education journals and books is low. The faculty have ordered new special education books, added journal publications to cover the infant-toddler and preschool level, and new data bases available online allowing students more access to information at the convenience of their computer. Several topics of interest and/or need for additional coursework and workshops with in-service were identified by survey respondents as sign language, behavior evaluation and management, more information on specific disabilities, speech and language, developmental delay, written plans for services (IEP and IFSP), developmentally appropriate practices and personnel development.

Objective 2:

A second objective for year one of the P.U.R.E. project was to organize and conduct focus groups to gain input on the types of pre-service and in-service training interests and needs. Those focus groups represented diverse populations of parents, family, administrators, agency representatives (healthcare, human services, workforce development, etc.), practitioners, educators, colleagues from two colleges, consulting professionals, community leaders, and child care providers had in the areas of special education and early childhood. The project coordinators also gathered information regarding training delivery options as far as time, distance learning, assistive technology for online coursework, courses given in the summer or on weekends, etc.

Project coordinators discovered the following recurring themes and issues from the Early Childhood focus groups: transitions (home to school, child care provider to school, preschool to kindergarten); communication (among and between practitioners, parents, providers and school personnel); parent involvement (development of IEP, on-going services, personnel training); regulations (state and federal mandates, school policies); family-centered (inclusive of family needs and issues, comfort levels, access to services); collaboration (among families, agencies, schools and personnel); and courses (scheduled at convenient times, locations, support current information, family-centered, and content unifies early childhood and special education).

Special Education issues identified the need for more training and in-service education on developmental delays, evaluation and assessment, writing IEP and IFSP's, and the desire to smooth the transition from home to school and school to provider. Issues identified by parents and families revealed many of the same thoughts, yet were expressed via questions. For instance parents and providers were asking questions like: Who can help me in understanding parental rights? How is the process of assessment and evaluation conducted for my child by the schools or practitioners? What procedures are involved with written plans like the IEP and IFSP? and How can I become more involved with my child's education and services?

After the focus groups had been conducted and information analyzed, the project coordinators discovered that the training needs and interests of all focus group participants were similar. As themes and issues emerged, it became evident that on-going training needed to be organized for the immediate future, coordinated with current training in the area, and training conducted by practitioners at frequent intervals that supported parents with varying levels of need.

Objective 3:

The third objective allowed the project co-facilitators to share the outcomes of focus groups and results of surveys with the stakeholders group of faculty, department chairs and deans. This informative session offered the necessary conclusion to year one of the grant and gave a perfect spring board into year two. The faculty would have time to ponder responses to questions as they consider their individual contribution to the endorsement as well as determine effective measures for creating a collaborative partnership. Faculty were reminded and encouraged to think "BIG" as the project goal for strengthening current program offerings to better prepare more well-qualified educators for inclusive environmental settings is realized.

The Project Coordinators also discovered that they had emerging questions. Questions, that would lead the project into the second year of activities. Questions with diverse and complex answers that would hopefully unfold as the collaboration project between interdisciplinary departments and institutions continued to emerge, and the level of trust supported with a network of open communication was built. Some of the questions Project Coordinators were asking that provided a guide to year two of the Project were:

1. How do we build cooperation with other faculty members?
2. How do we add to the partnership existing between CSC and WNCC?
3. How do we cross-departmentalize and integrate curriculum based on objectives and outcomes?
4. Should we obtain faculty development monies to address curriculum change?
5. How do we build another long term faculty position into the department(s) to satisfy the type of educational needs, time elements and location demands?
6. How and what will it take to develop coursework, workshops, seminars, team teaching, etc. between CSC and other state colleges and universities in Nebraska?

P.U.R.E. Project: Year Two

In year two of the project, the first goal and focus was on the proposed Early Childhood endorsement program which needed planning and scheduling for the new college catalog, and a means for advertising to acquire students seeking this type of endorsement.

Additionally, the endorsement program required faculty to collaborate and plan the courses within the guidelines of standards for personnel serving children and families of special needs, to involve families and parents in the curriculum of those courses, and to emphasize the co-teaching or collaborative planning and teaching of course content.

The endorsement was simply planned to include Early Childhood and Special Education courses listed within the endorsement of 45 credit hours. More complicated would be the academic structure needed for interdisciplinary faculty development, teaching, student experiences, and inclusion of families. A nation-wide survey of pre-service programs across 10 disciplines conducted ten years ago indicated interdisciplinary training rarely occurs (Bailey, Simeonsson, Yoder & Huntington, 1990). Other barriers of the Higher Education institutes have been studied and researched by Lawson & Hopper-Briar (1994) and Winton & DiVenere (1995). These challenges are individually and collectively met by the administrators, faculty, families and students involved at the two and four year Higher Education institutes. ,Coupling that academic structure with a rural setting, there are additional issues of communication, scheduling with travel time, distance between the two-year and four-year institution, distance learning, technology, and the needed networking of personnel and agencies.

Communication and reporting of grant progress toward the goal of preparation of students for Early Childhood Special Education services continues directly in related agency meetings. Indirectly, on going communication efforts are supported online at the website www.csc.edu/p/pure which lists activities and events concerning the endorsement and active participation with other agencies in training personnel for Head Start, child care, respite and special services coordination.

The second goal of the P.U.R.E. project year two was the development of collaboration for this endorsement and for the preparation of personnel. Many publications including chapters, and entire books have been written on the topic of collaboration: what works and what doesn't work. Suffice it to say, collaboration is always a challenge!

The P.U.R.E. project was an initial collaboration between an Early Childhood professor and Special Education professor. From there, the collaboration extended to other individuals in the grant, community agencies, other professors in the two departments, and finally to a Community College. The co-facilitators continue to find agencies and local school districts to be supportive of the scheme of the grant and support the preparation of personnel. To accommodate a diverse range of children in the early years, Miller and Stayton (1998), discussed an emerging trend in early childhood teacher training programs that blends principles and practices of Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education.

When a partnership is there between professionals and parents, personnel are prepared to meet the needs of children with special needs and therefore, the needs of ALL children. When parents are thinking children with disabilities take an inordinate amount of time away from the other children, Thurman and Widerstrom (1990), stated that "the developmental outcome for children in inclusive programs depends on the quality of the teaching, not the amount of integration". Programs that train and certify teachers for early childhood services must know the interplay between language, culture and disability as well as its impact on young children and their families (Hanson & Brennan, 1997). Which brings this paper to the third goal, involvement of families and parents with faculty in course planning and curriculum development.

Development of faculty and families was an important objective for goal three. There were professors involved with the grant who needed more information about child growth and development, knowledge of behavior management, a deeper understanding of best practices for quality child care, and guidance in understanding information on certain disabilities as they interact with and impact the developing child. Likewise, some professors have typically not worked with families or parents in their course curriculum or as co-presenters. As a key part of this goal, project funds provided faculty attendance at the Midwest Faculty Development Institute in November, 2000 in Kansas City, Missouri. There were many opportunities for faculty from both the two and four year institutions to attend sessions about different topics which integrated resource materials and personnel in both early childhood and special education services. Some faculty heard for the first time, sessions that were presented by parents and parent trainers about services that special services coordinators need to understand about families and individuals with disabilities.

Lastly, the P.U.R.E. project is interconnected to six other S.C.R.I.P.T. projects within the state of Nebraska and to their identified goals for early childhood intervention. All are at the Higher Education level with promotion of programs at the undergraduate and graduate level. Endorsements are being granted with interdisciplinary team assessment, intervention, and services both educationally and medically. State mandates for funding emphasize consolidation of services for best practices and best delivery making better use of resources (money, time and personnel).

Future Implications for the Project

When the Nebraska certification office, State Board of Education, and institutes of higher learning establish the Early Childhood Unified Education endorsement, Chadron State College in partnership with the local community college, Western Nebraska Community College, will be progressing toward a common goal of better prepared personnel for carrying out early childhood special services. The program will be interdisciplinary with courses collaboratively designed by families, parents, administrators, and colleagues from other departments for effective delivery (Edelman, 2000). A key entity in the process will be a continued state-wide collaboration among state department personnel and other projects. The interconnected S.C.R.I.P.T. projects around the state of Nebraska will begin to compliment the delivery and type of curriculum needed by personnel in Early Childhood Education. The governor of Nebraska has also supported funding for the programs in Health and Human Services that emphasize early childhood intervention. Together, this effort will improve statistics for the reduction of infant mortality, increase the quality of infant and toddler child care, improve the intervention process for children with special needs, and better prepare children for school and learning.

References

Bailey, C., Simeonsson, R., Yoder, D. & Huntington, K. (1990). Preparing Professionals to serve infants and toddlers with handicaps and their families: An integrative analysis across eight disciplines. Exceptional Children, 57(1), 26-35.

Edelman, L (2000). A Patchwork of Survivor Skills for Early Childhood Practitioners. Midwest Faculty Institute: Kansas City, MO.

Hanson, M.J., & Brennan, E.L. (1997). Language, Culture and Disability: Interacting Influences on Preschool Inclusion. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 17(3), 307-334.

Miller, P.S., & Stayton, F.D. (1998). Blended Interdisciplinary Teacher Preparation in Early Education and Intervention: A National study. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 81(1), 49.

Nebraska S.C.R.I.P.T. (2000-2001). Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Grant Project under federal IDEA, Part C and Part B, Section 619.

Thurman, K.S., & Widerstrom, A.H. (1990). Infants and Young Children with Special Needs. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Winton, P.J., & Divenere, N. (1995). Intervention Personnel Preparation: Guidelines and Strategies. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 15(3), 296-313.

Gifted

Clar M. Baldus, Ph. D.
Administrator, Rural Schools Programs
Inventiveness Programs
State Coordinator, Invent Iowa

The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development
210 Lindquist Ctr, The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242-1529
319/335-6148 800/336-6463
Fax 319/335-5151
e-mail: clar-baldus@uiowa.edu
http://www.uiowa.edu/~belinctr

GIFTED EDUCATION IN RURAL SCHOOLS: A NATIONAL ASSESSMENT (1999)

Introduction

American schools on the brink of the next millennium are obviously different places than their 19th century counterparts. The introduction of computer labs, the racial integration of schools, and the grouping of classrooms by age comprise some of the most radical changes our schools have undergone in the last century. But as every kindergarten teacher or professor of education knows, many facets of our schools have stayed the same and many so-called innovations have come full circle. The common school movement of the mid-1800's, itself a reaction to industrialization, created a model of schooling that continues to be very much in use to this day, with relatively large classes of students working in rows, waiting for a bell to sound, and moving from one distinct subject area to the next.

Rural Schools

Rural schools have a complex history. For many small and isolated communities they have been a focal point of activity, serving not only as a place for the education of children, but also as a meeting space for political and social affairs. Townships have traditionally taken pride in and felt a strong ownership of their schools, viewing them as a defining and shared centerpiece. Like many facets of education, rural schools have been victim to cyclical schools of thought. At the end of the 20th century, for example, many of the mainstays of small schools are being heralded by the education establishment; smaller class size, mixed grades, and the community as classroom are all popular methods today. At other times, however, small and rural schools have come under attach, facing accusations of being backwards and insufficiently rigorous. In the name of modernization and industrialization, many rural schools have been closed in favor of larger, consolidated buildings. While critics have sometimes been right about the deficiencies of these schools, they have more often been shortsighted and unconcerned with the best form of education for rural students.

Gifted Education

As with rural education, gifted education has experienced a see-saw effect of interest and disinterest on the part of the educational establishment. Whether gifted students are viewed as an invaluable commodity that should be well-funded and nourished, or as an elitist group draining money from other projects, there has often been a strong reaction to gifted education in the United States. Writing in 1976, one expert in the field, T. Ernest Newland, summarized nicely what a number of more recent researchers continue to believe: "Society's perceptions of the gifted have varied with the ways in which it perceives its needs."

Gifted Education in Rural Areas

Unlike the comprehensive reports and histories that have been written about both gifted and rural education, respectively, there are no such roadmaps for us to follow on the topic of how our most academically able and talented students are being served by America's small and rural schools. Relatively little has been written on the combined topics. In 1976, T. Ernest Newland wrote that the condition of the gifted in rural areas "seems to have been little studied." He proceeded to allot one chapter to the obstacles in providing challenge to gifted students in rural areas and outlined some alternatives. Almost two decades later, Jane Piirto also briefly addressed the needs of rural and gifted youth, very much echoing the observations of Newland, her earlier colleague; the only significant difference between the two is the increased attention by the latter author given to technology as a potential delivery system.

Definitions of Rural

Establishing a definition of *rural* sounds simple enough. We have found it, however, to be the most complicated task of this report. Most reports on rural subjects contain an explanation of how the authors have grapples with this definition. Even the federal government and its myriad of offices —to which we turned for precedence—does not use a single definition. Rather, respective federal offices use multiple meanings and often eschew the term altogether in favor of the less precise *nonmetropolitan.* Instead of defining what rural is, this all-too-convenient latter term lumps together everything it is *not.* Thus, our frustration over the elusive nature of this word puts us in good company.

Qualities of Rural Schools

Many analysts have commented on how the cultural gap between rural and metropolitan areas has diminished as a result of such factors as commuting, cable television, and regional shopping malls, Still, schools in rural areas possess some unique qualities. For example, they are relatively isolated, situated geographically far apart from resources such as cultural centers, universities, large libraries, and even other schools. Teachers in these areas don't have ready access to institutions that would allow them to augment their training, nor are materials near at hand to research or expand curriculum. Students have less exposure to a range of professions than their suburban peers. Being part of small classes also limits the chance that a student with special needs will have a classmate with similar aptitude or interests.

Survey of State Departments of Education: The Top-Twenty Rural States

In order to learn more about the state of gifted education in rural schools, we surveyed two groups. First, we surveyed those people responsible for gifted education in state departments of education. Second, we surveyed rural educators. Presentation and discussion of the surveys are included in the Gifted Education in Rural Schools: A National Assessment (1999).

Survey of Rural Educators

One of the best indications we received of the quality of life in rural schools, as it pertains to giftedness, came from a six-question survey of rural educators. In March 1998, we mailed 55 surveys to members of rural associations, rural-related advisory boards of national committees, and rural experts at the 10 regional educational laboratories. Additional copies were made and dispersed by some of the original recipients. By July, we had received 28 returned and completed surveys. A summary of the responses is also included in Gifted Education in Rural Schools: A National Assessment (1999).

The Road Ahead

Much more needs to be learned about the best ways of identifying and serving gifted youth in rural schools. Currently, there is an inadequate conglomeration of mismatched research and data that does little to help those on the educational frontlines who are trying to provide effective programming for these students. The Belin-Blank Center proposes several steps to take as we work toward improving education for the gifted in rural schools. A new publication, Gifted Voices from Rural America, will be presented at the *The Wallace Family National Conference on Gifted Education in Rural Schools* at the University of Iowa in May 2001.

References

Gifted Education in Rural Schools: A National Assessment (1999)
Authors:

Nicholas Colangelo, Ph. D., Director, Belin-Blank Center, and Myron & Jacqueline Blank Professor of Gifted Education

Susan G. Assouline, Ph. D., Associate Director, Belin-Blank Center

Jennifer K. New, M. A., Special Projects, Belin-Blank Center

©1999 The University of Iowa

Dr. Joan D. Lewis
University of Nebraska at Kearney
Department of Teacher Education
MSAB 172
Kearney, NE 68849

HOW TO COMPACT THE CURRICULUM WHEN STUDENTS KNOW THE SKILLS

Too many students who already know some or even most of the basic skills being taught are having to practice what they already know in school. This is not learning. Further, it teaches undesirable "study" skills and attitudes. Curriculum compacting involves pre-testing students to determine previous mastery of the skill the teacher proposes to teach. It is a relatively easy way to begin to meet the needs of gifted learners without the need for prior identification or labeling. It has the added advantage of meeting the needs of any student who can master the pretest, hence benefiting a wide range of students over the course of a year. This is a diagnostic-prescriptive approach to teaching in the regular classroom that can benefit many children. In addition, curriculum compacting works well in different sized schools.

In small schools with limited personnel and resources, finding the time to differentiate instruction for learners who are gifted is limited. The lack of opportunities for these children to learn at the appropriate developmental level is exacerbated when there are very few such students in the school (Spicker, Southern, & Davis, 1987). Curriculum compacting is well suited for this environment and can be used at any grade level and in almost any content (Reis & Renzulli, 1992). It is an easy way to begin providing gifted services. Essentially it is a model that differs little from what teachers in rural schools did to meet the needs of multiple grade levels in one-room schools years ago and even today. "Curriculum compacting might best be thought of as organized common sense" (Reis & Renzulli, 1992, p. 51). Also important, curriculum compacting incorporates the accountability that is so critical in our modern schools.

Rationale for Compacting

Some students come to school knowing much of the curriculum for one or more subject area before it is formally taught -- or they can learn the content so quickly that they need very little practice. These students require modifications in their instruction to insure that they actually learn new concepts and skills. Contrary to popular belief, repeated practice is not necessary or beneficial for some children (Clark, 1997). Many gifted learners have difficulty coping with the same pace and structure that are part of the regular curriculum. To require these children to do the same work in the same way as the rest of the class frequently teaches poor study skills, may cause the students to develop a dislike of school (Clark, 1997; Winebrenner, 1992), and can even cause emotional pain (Clark, 1997; Silverman, 1993). All students need to work at the instructional level that is appropriate for *them*.

Unfortunately, the content in regular classes has progressively gotten easier for many decades to the extent that in some subjects even average ability children already know a large portion of the curriculum before it is taught (Reis & Renzulli, 1992). Reis and Renzulli summarize some of the research on the "dumbing down" of the curriculum in US schools. One of the problems is that schools tend to buy one textbook per grade level for each subject, which makes economic sense, but does not recognize that all children are not at the same level. Common practice is that above average and gifted learners are not challenged because educators believe they can make it on their own (Clark, 1997). Is it reasonable for educators to expect *any* child to teach him or herself without guidance from us because we do not take the time?

Curriculum compacting is a strategy shown to be effective for adapting regular curriculum for gifted learners. Teachers, principals, and parents may be concerned that gifted students participating in curriculum compacting may miss out on critical skills if content is eliminated. This worry seems to be unfounded. For example, Reis et al. (1993) found that as much as 50% of the regular curriculum could be eliminated with no difference in student performance on above-grade-level tests when compared to similar students who had not had compacting. These findings applied to the major content areas in elementary school, not including science. These same researchers specify that approximately 40-50% of the regular elementary curriculum can be eliminated in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies for selected students who have a strength in that area.

Description on Curriculum Compacting

Curriculum compacting is a method that can be used to structure learning for students who need more challenge because they already know the content. Students who master the curriculum content are then helped to determine appropriate replacement learning objectives (Winebrenner, 1992). The following steps, developed by Reis, Burns, and Renzulli (1992), describe the process:

1. Select the learning objectives for a given subject. Look for the key concepts and skills rather than spending time on every activity you will teach.
2. Find or create an appropriate way to pretest these objectives. The end of the unit test is a quick and easy way to assess. Authentic or other alternative assessments can be useful too.
3. Identify students who may have mastered the objectives or have the potential to master them at a faster than normal pace, or pretest all students in the classroom.
4. Pretest students before beginning instruction on one or more of the objectives.
5. Streamline practice, drill or instructional time for students who have learned the objectives.
6. Provide instructional options for students who have not yet attained *all* the pretested objectives, but generally learn faster than their classmates.
7. Organize and recommend enrichment or acceleration options for eligible students. These replacement activities should not be more of the same stuff, but represent real learning opportunities.
8. Keep records of the process and instructional options available to students whose curriculum has been compacted for reporting to parents and forward these records to next year's teachers.

Each of these components is critical for ensuring the time gifted and high ability learners spend in the classroom is not wasted and to provide the accountability required by the district. Tomlinson (1999) restates the process as follows:

> Teachers document (1) what the student already knows (and evidence for that conclusion), (2) what the preassessment indicates the student does not know about the topic or skill (and plans for how the student will earn those things), and (3) a plan for meaningful and challenging use of the time the student will "buy" because she already knows much of the topic or skill. Compacting begins with a focus on student readiness and ends with an emphasis on student interest. (pp 91-92)

The Individual Educational Programming Guide, The Compactor, was developed by Renzulli and Smith and copyrighted in 1978. There are places to record the student's name, age, grade, teacher(s), parent(s), school, and notations on the planning and persons involved in the development of this IEP, or Compactor. The Compactor is divided into three columns, each with its own heading and explanation of material required. The first column is for "Curriculum areas to be considered for compacting," with the directions to "provide a brief description of basic material to be covered during this marking period and the assessment information or evidence that suggests the need for compacting." The middle column is used for "Procedures for compacting basic material" and should contain a description of "activities that will be used to guarantee proficiency in basic curricular areas." The last section is for "Acceleration and/or enrichment activities." Teachers should "describe activities that will be used to provide advanced level learning experiences in each area of the regular curriculum" that are being compacted (cited in Reis et al., 1992). Winebrenner (1992) has simplified the original Compactor heading the three parts as the "Areas of Strength," "Documenting Mastery," and "Alternate Activities" (p. 17). Basically, name it, prove it, change it.

Getting Started

Students are pre-tested before the unit of instruction is begun. Teachers may elect to include all students or allow students to choose to challenge the test. The former is easier to manage; the latter may be more comfortable for students. For most learners, children or adults, taking a test that you know you will most likely not pass is very uncomfortable! Therefore, you may find it more desirable to announce before the unit begins that any student who feels (s)he knows the topic well and thinks (s)he could earn an A or B right now may challenge the test. The back of your room or the library is a convenient location. While these students are challenging the test, the rest of the class will work on an interesting enrichment activity that will serve as an anticipatory set for the unit. Reassure the test-takers that they will have the opportunity to do this activity later if they want to (Winebrenner, 1992). You do not need to write an extra test. Just use the one you would give the class at the end of the unit. Some subjects are regularly assessed with more authentic assessments, such as art, music, home economics, and drafting. Use the same methods you would employ to determine mastery. The main point is that you do not need to create additional assessment methods.

Any student who achieves your pre-determined mastery level earns the opportunity to work on more challenging learning projects while you teach the rest of the class the planned content. Replacement learning activities are usually selected from the same content area that was compacted. The time "bought" from the regular curriculum should be used to enhance the area of strength and not be used to remediate a weakness in another subject. This "bought" time should be used to enhance the child's skills in the area of strength (Winebrenner, 1992). Maker (1982) points out that we educators are more used to addressing student "needs" than extending student strengths. Therefore, she says to turn gifted students' strengths into needs and work to meet those needs.

It is important not to require a "perfect" paper because many of these children suffer from perfectionism and do not need it reinforced. Skills that are not mastered are noted and the student is held responsible for learning them and demonstrating mastery (Tomlinson, 1999). There are different views on how much of the pretest must be mastered to gain access to the extension opportunities. Most gifted kids will want an "A." Therefore, for students who earn a 90% or better, record that grade in your gradebook and on the student's Compactor form (Winebrenner, 1992). For students who have mastered at least a 75% of the content, note that achievement on the student's Compactor as well as skills that need to be mastered before you record the final grade (Tomlinson, 1999). Winebrenner (1992) points out that the compacted students are expected to return to the class assignment for skills they have not mastered and any special learning opportunities that would benefit or interest them. To enable these students to plan their time and so you do not look arbitrary, give the kids one day's notice.

How are the students graded? If a student earns an A on the pre-test, that is the grade the child receives for the unit. When you accept any other grade, let the child take the post-test with everyone else to have the opportunity to obtain credit for the increased skills. Replacement content is not usually graded, although students benefit from behavioral descriptors of their work. It is, however, inappropriate to grade them on above-level or additional work (Winebrenner, 1992).

Most teachers have some experience with this method whether they realize it or not. Take the example spelling. Each Monday a new unit is begun. There are a variety of structured exercises for students to practice the words. On Wednesday we often give a pretest as an incentive to practice and learn the spelling of the words. Anyone who gets them all right is released from the Friday test because they have demonstrated mastery. So why do the children who have mastered the words still have to do the regular spelling practice on Thursday? Indeed, why wait until Wednesday to make this determination? Give the spelling pretest on Monday. Any child who has mastered the words should be given alternative words or application assignments. Guided and independent practice are intended to develop skill in an area that is new and/or not yet mastered. Why then make students who know the words participate in all that unnecessary practice? Winebrenner (1992) provides a list of alternative spelling activities for using new words and regular or alternative words (p. 18). Students can keep a list of words they encounter in their reading or other classes or look through the glossaries in their texts or in the dictionary to develop alternative lists. Secondary students find it beneficial to substitute words from lists of words commonly used on college entrance exams when the class is working on vocabulary and spelling.

Some teachers and parents wonder if this is fair. Why not? All students have the same opportunities to perform. Why does it have to be exactly the same to be fair? Consider sports. Some people excel while others do not. People have different abilities that we seem to accept more readily. It would not be reasonable or practical for the varsity team members to practice the same skills at the same time in the same way in the general physical education class. They would not receive the intensive practice they need to win games. This analogy holds true to all content areas. To develop skill it is necessary to work at the appropriate level *for them* and preferably with peers of similar ability.

What do you do if a student takes the materials home and studies over the weekend to pass the pretest? Winebrenner (1992) says to let them. She points out that we can hardly complain if students *willingly study in advance.* Think about it. We want students to learn because they value the learning. Is it fair? Certainly. With spelling in particular, all students take the pretest and they all have the same opportunities to study in advance. Any student who can master the scheduled spelling list simply works on alternate spelling-related activities. The Compactor permits you to document *why* some students are doing different activities.

Arithmetic and math are also well suited to compacting and are easy subjects with which to work begin because the skills are hierarchical. To begin compacting, give the pretest for single-digit addition, simplifying quadratic equations, or whatever your content, to all students or just those who have demonstrated they have the potential to pass your unit test or need less instruction to do so. Use the Compactor for documentation: 1) Name or describe the content in the first column and assessment results; 2) Describe how you will insure that any unmastered content is learned in column two; and 3) Identify the replacement learning activities (Reis et al., 1992; Tomlinson, 1999). Winebrenner (1992) places the description of assessment(s) in column two without specific notation of learning any objectives that need additional work. She does expect accommodations to be made to meet those objectives; she uses a separate form that allows for greater detail for those children who did not initially master the objectives.

Compacting is most effective for subjects that are skill-based, but can be used for almost any subject. Although it is most commonly used in elementary math and language arts classes, it can be used in science and social studies (Reis et al., 1993). It is also not limited to basic content areas or elementary education. Teachers of high school mathematics and science expressed to the author that it was a relief to know there was something they could do for their advanced students (personal communication June 30, 2000). They were excited and relieved that they had a way to monitor and document more complex instruction for these students. Now they had concrete information to share with parents who wanted to be sure their students were being challenged. In addition, a teacher in home economics found curriculum compacting provided structure and accountability for what she was already doing with her students. Teachers find they can adapt this strategy to suit their needs.

Once the need for enriching and/or accelerating experiences is documented, replacements that represent *meaningful learning* for that student are selected (Tomlinson, 1999). The student's interests should be considered in this process. One way to do this is to give them an interest inventory (Reis et al., 1992; Winebrenner, 1992). The teacher and student need to agree on the replacement learning opportunities. Winebrenner encourages the use of a contract to help you and the student manage what the student will do, the timeline, and rules of behavior. She provides practical suggestions and forms in her book *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom (1992)*. So do Smutney, Walker, and Meckstroth in their 1997 book *Teaching Young Gifted Children in the Regular Classroom*. One place to begin locating enriching opportunities for compacted students might be the extension activities in the teachers' manual. These ideas will probably need to be adapted for greater depth and to meet the interests of the students. Tomlinson (1999) describes different instructional strategies that can provide guidance in her book *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*; Winebrenner and Smutney et al. do the same. Talk with other teachers for ideas. This is a chance to be really creative! For example, a student who compacts out of a unit on basic measurement could apply those skills in some personally interesting fashion, such as creating a floor plan for a room, house, even a garden. Making models "from scratch" and developing quilt patterns are variations that might appeal to some students. A mentor can be located in the school or community to provide advice or instruction. The possibilities can be exciting. You may even want to teach some of these skills to your "regular" students and see how excited this authentic learning can be for them too.

Independent study is a very broad name for students learning on their own and is frequently employed with learners who are gifted. Three major components need to be in place for this strategy to even begin to be appropriate: 1) The topic needs to be interesting to the student and not just an additional assignment from the teacher; 2) The area of proposed study needs to be broad enough to allow for in-depth, meaningful learning; 3) The student continues to have regular attention and feedback from the teacher and is not left entirely on his or her own. When gifted students have the opportunity to work in a self-selected area of interest that provides the opportunity for real learning for them, you may be amazed at what they can accomplish. In addition, many researchers point out that underachievement can often be reversed (e.g., Clark, 1997; Reis et al., 1992; Tomlinson, 1999; Winebrenner 1992).

Curriculum compacting has the potential to benefit many students with strengths in a wide variety of content areas, allowing them to work at higher levels and thus increase their skills. The key is to document mastery, note any areas that might need additional instruction and/or practice for mastery, the method by which this will occur, and then provide challenging replacement learning opportunities for the compacted content. For teachers in rural schools, this is an effective way for high ability and gifted learners to experience real learning in school even in the absence of other gifted services. Unfortunately, just identifying gifted students is not sufficient to ensure appropriate learning. Few teachers differentiate learning for gifted children in the regular classroom even when they know who those children are (Archambault, Westberg, Brown, Hallmark, Emmons, & Zhang, 1993). This finding is not really surprising given the growing demands on teachers' time and the increasing heterogeneity of our schools. Curriculum compacting, while not satisfying *all* the needs of gifted learners, can call attention to and begin meeting their cognitive needs. It is a good place to begin providing services for gifted learners regardless of the size or location of the school.

References

Archambault, F. A., Jr., Westberg, K. L., Brown, S. W., Hallmark, B. W., Emmons, C. L., & Zhang, W. (1993). *Regular classroom practices with gifted students: Results of a national survey of classroom teachers* (Research Monograph 93102). Storrs, CT: The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

Clark, B. (1997). *Growing up gifted (5th ed)*. New York: Merrill.

Maker, C. J. (1982). *Curriculum development for the gifted.* Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

Reis, S. M., Burns, D. E., & Renzulli, J. S. (1992). Curriculum compacting: A guide for teachers (Grant No. R206R00001). Storrs, CT: National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

Reis, S. M., & Renzulli, J. S. (1992). Using curriculum compacting to challenge the above-average. *Educational Leadership, 50*(2), 51-57.

Reis, S. M., Westberg, K. L., Kulikowich, J., Caillard, F., Hébert, T., Plucker, J., Purcell, J. H., Rogers, J. B., & Smist, J. M. (1993). *Why not let high ability students start school in January? The curriculum compacting study* (Research Monograph 93106). Storrs, CT: The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

Silverman, L.K. (1993). *Counseling the gifted and talented.* Denver, CO: Love.

Spicker, H. H., Southern, W. T., & Davis, B. I. (1987). The rural gifted child. *Gifted Child,* 31(4), 155-157.

Smutney, J. F. (1997). *Teaching young gifted kids in the regular classroom*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Winebrenner, S. (1992). *Teaching gifted kids in the regular classroom*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Joan D. Lewis
University of Nebraska at Kearney
Department of Teacher Education
MSAB 172
Kearney, NE 68849

LANGUAGE ISN'T NEEDED: NONVERBAL ASSESSMENTS AND GIFTED LEARNERS

Screening and identification for gifted services is frequently dependent on the students displaying certain typical behaviors associated with gifted learners as well as strong test taking skills. Children with background experiences that differ from the mainstream (i.e., rural, low SES, LEP, different cultural heritage) are not well-represented in many gifted programs because they never even get *to*, much less *through*, the screening process. Parents may not know the services exist or see the relevance to their lives and therefore do not request testing. Teachers and other educators may not recognize non-typical manifestations of "gifted characteristics" and not request testing. Community members may not volunteer their knowledge of high level skills they observe outside of school for a variety of reasons. Neither they nor parents may realize the possibility or value of nominating a child for gifted services.

Yet referral for gifted programs requires that s*omeone* notice the strengths of these students and support them. Few culturally different children are tested for gifted services when compared to children from the dominant culture (Castellano, 1998). Hispanic, African-American, and Native American students are gravely underrepresented in classes for students of gifted and talented abilities (De Leon & Argus-Calvo, 1997; Spicker, Fletcher, Montgomery, & Breard, 1993).

Those who are referred for testing face the hurdle of assessments that depend on language. Students who lack mastery of English may produce depressed test scores. Because their ability to think and problem solve at high levels is masked by their limited use of language. Unless there are alternate methods included in the identification process, culturally different children are at a distinct disadvantage. Their language facility may be poor, they may not have the depth of usage or comprehension to grapple with difficult topics, and they may not have the experiential background from which to draw when solving problems (Barkan & Bernal, 1991). Nevertheless, there are children among this group that are capable of working at a gifted level in valued areas of learning the same as children from the dominant culture (Spicker et al., 1993).

Even when students are native speakers of English, they may not be readily identified for gifted and talented programs. For example, children from rural and disadvantaged backgrounds perform less well on standardized tests. These kinds of tests are frequently biased in favor of white, middle to upper class suburban and urban children (Clark, 1997). Children who live in poverty or who may have limited proficiency in English are not readily identified in this manner (Spicker, Southern, & Davis, 1991). They tend to be more able to demonstrate their abilities on nonverbal rather than verbal tests (Spicker et al., 1993). Therefore, there is considerable interest in testing potentially gifted children using nonverbal standardized measures (e.g., Nasca, 1988; Spicker et al., 1993; Stephen, Kiger, Karnes, & Whorton, 1999). These tests are not a panacea; however, as problem solving with patterns is no more a universal indicator of intelligent behavior than is facility with language. Nevertheless, nonverbal tests provide one more tool to be included in the identification process. "One does not have to be fluent in English to be intelligent" (Barkan & Bernal, 1991, p. 144).

Selection of assessment instruments that allow the student to demonstrate more of his/her ability is an ethical necessity (Drummond, 2000). Even nonverbal assessments are not fair to all students; such a test may not be possible given human diversity. Tests capture a moment in time, essentially a snapshot of a student's skills in a specific area under specific conditions. If the test asks the "right" questions for that student, the student has an increased chance of achieving a high score. Still, use of multiple assessments can do a better job of capturing the more fluid nature of a construct as complex as intelligence in its many manifestations (Nasca, 1988). Nonverbal assessments need to be a part of the screening and identification process for gifted learners.

Published research investigating the use of alternative assessments, particularly nonverbal measures, for uncovering potentially gifted learners is sparse and the methods of their use differ. Stephen et al. (1999) recently conducted a study focusing on low income students in a rural southern school who were primarily (91%) African-American. Using three non-verbal assessments, the Culture Fair Intelligence Test (Cattell & Cattell, 1965), the Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (Naglieri, 1996), and the Raven Standard Progressive Matrices (Raven, Court, & Raven, 1996), they screened intact classes of students in grades 3-8 looking for students who were potentially gifted. In this study, the Raven Matrices identified more students scoring at or above the 80th percentile than did either of the other two tests; however, the Culture Fair and Naglieri identified some students not found by the Raven Matrices. Likewise, Lewis and Michelson Grippin (2000) employed the same intact class model, tests, and grade levels. This study focused on two schools serving low-income and often rural families that had a relatively high incidence of Hispanic students in a midwestern town. Both studies are discussed in greater detail later in this article.

Nonverbal tests may contain an element of language that needs to be considered. The directions for each test employed in the Lewis and Michelson Grippin (2000) and Stephen et al. (1999) studies were verbal and given in English; however, the modeling component that accompanies these verbal directions helps compensate by allowing the administrator to briefly "teach" students the required skill. The tests themselves consist of a variety tasks employing graphical figures with no words. They may be administered in a group or individually.

The Culture Fair Intelligence Tests consist of three separate scales based on age. Scale 1 is for children from 4 to 8 years of age. Scale 2 is appropriate for children 8 years and older and includes adults. Scale 3 is appropriate for people with higher levels of intelligence, age 13 years and above, because it is the most difficult. There are also two forms which, when administered to the same individual within the specified time frame yield an IQ score (Cattell & Cattell, 1965). These tests consist of four separate timed sections that assess series, characteristics, matrices, and conditions. Administration takes about 30 minutes.

The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test is a recently published language-free assessment of children's nonverbal reasoning and problem solving abilities that employs the colors yellow and blue as part of the pattern. One of the goals of this test is to identify students of high potential with limited English proficiency. Items are universally recognized shapes and designs that must be completed according to some rule inferred by the student (Naglieri, 1996). The test can be administered to any school-age student and covers grades K-12 using different levels, A though G. Each level contains 38 items and is timed. Administration of the instrument takes about 30 minutes.

Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices are a series of 60 black and white figural analogies, grouped into 5 sets of 12. No letters or numbers are included. Items in each set progress in difficulty and the nature of the task increases in complexity from Set A through Set E. The Raven's has a long history of usage with individuals from many cultures (Raven et al., 1996). Administration usually takes about 25 minutes for this untimed instrument; however, some reflective students may take twice as long.

A word of caution. Care should be taken when administering, scoring, and interpreting these, or any other standardized tests, to follow the directions precisely so as not to invalidate the results. Because the Culture Fair Intelligence Test can yield an IQ score, only qualified personnel should score and interpret it (Cattell & Cattell, 1965). The tests are usually used to screen for potentially gifted learners, not identify them. Nevertheless, the responsibility for appropriate preparation and use should not be taken lightly.

With these concerns in mind, students in both studies being discussed who attained scores of 80%ile or better on one or more of the three instruments were flagged for additional study. Stephen et al. (1999) found 39 scores of 80%ile or greater, 26 different students out of the 189 students who were tested. More students were identified using the Raven's (15); however, each test identified some unique individuals. The procedure was similar for the Lewis and Michelson Grippin (2000) study since it was intentionally replicating the earlier study with a different population. Of the 270 students in grades 3-8 that participated, 89 students were selected with one or more of the tests. The Raven's and CFIT found nearly the same number of students (59 and 58 respectively), more than twice as many students at the NNAT (22). Only 11 students were identified with all three instruments.

Student composition in the Lewis and Michelson Grippin (2000) study was 36.6% Hispanic (99 students), 59.3% White (160 students), and 4.1% Other (11 students). The percentage of Hispanic students was noticeably higher for grades 3-5 (49.6%) and dropped in grades 6-8 (22.9%). Of the students who scored 80%ile or better on one or more of the tests, 25.8% were Hispanic (23 students) and 68.5% were White (61 students), a ratio of 1:2.7

favoring White students compared to the 1:1.7 ratio for the full class. Table 1 summarizes the data on score distribution and racial classification

Table 1. Scores on One or More Test by Percent Score Range and Racial Classification

Percentile on 1 or More Test	Hispanic Students	White Students	Other Classification	Total Students
95%ile or greater	5	18	2	25
90 - 94%ile	5	15	1	21
85 - 89%ile	5	18	1	24
80 - 84%ile	8	10	1	19
Total Students	23 (25.8%)	61 (68.5%)	5 (5.6%)	89

The question then becomes, which test is best? That is not easy to answer. In the Lewis and Michelson Grippin (2000) study, the large majority of potential students were found by a combination of the Raven's and the CFIT (57.6% of scores) while in the Stephen et al. (1999) research, the Raven's was more efficient. The former researchers found that for Hispanic students in their study, the CFIT was more effective, 73.9% of the 23 students meeting or exceeding the 80%ile criteria (17) compared to 52.1% for the Raven's (12 scores). For White students, the Raven's was more successful (44 students, 72.1%) compared to the CFIT (37 students, 60.7%). The NNAT was not as useful, but did contribute some unique scores. Unfortunately, Hispanics are still under identified when compared with the White population; nearly 7 White students for every 4 Hispanic students. Nevertheless, these students might not have been discovered by more traditional means. None of the children in these schools were being served by the district's gifted program. A comparison of scores by test and racial classification are provided in Table 2. Note that the total number of students found with each test is smaller than the number of scores at or above 80%ile; some students reached this criterion on more than one test.

Table 2. Scores Equal To or Better Than 80%ile by Test and Racial Classification

Test	Racial Classification			Total Students
	Hispanic	White	Other	
CFIT	17	37	3	58
NNAT	4	16	2	22
Raven's	12	44	3	59
Total Scores	33	97	8	139
Total Students	23	61	5	89

Coleman and Cross (2000) recommend a continuous program of screening beginning as early as possible and being repeated every year until fourth grade and every other year thereafter. They think this would provide reasonable opportunities for students who have been missed in one grade to be found later. One part of this screening process could include nonverbal assessment. Since not one of the tests alone placed all of the potential participants in the pool for additional assessment, a logical approach might be to use two of these tests, alternating their use from year to year. The Raven's would appear to be the most efficient choice (Lewis & Michelson Grippin, 2000; Stephen et al., 1999) paired with the CFIT (Lewis & Michelson Grippin, 2000).

There are several advantages to the model of intact class testing as a first step in identification process of learners who are gifted. Use of non-verbal assessments can counter most of the language difficulty experienced by many culturally different children. All students are included, so teacher judgment is essentially eliminated. Equity of opportunity at this screening stage provides a more diverse pool of potential applicants than can be obtained with traditional assessments. It is important that the pool of candidates is broad enough that few potentially gifted students are overlooked. The students are then studied more thoroughly to determine their eligibility for gifted services based on student need and the school or district's ability to meet those needs. Coleman and Cross (2000) point out that when all students in the specified grades are included in this screening phase, the goal of equal opportunity to be considered is more nearly attained.

Each test described here has its advantages and may work better for some populations than others. Until additional research is conducted to help clarify which screening procedures are most successful, a combination of assessment methods is recommended to provide a pool of candidates that are more representative of the local population. It then remains for the final identification procedures to be chosen with careful consideration to ensure that the talents of our most able students, regardless of culture, are not squandered -- and provision of services that utilize their strengths.

References

Barkan, J. H., & Bernal, E. M. (1991). Gifted education for bilingual and limited English proficient students. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 35*, 144-147.

Castellano, J. A. (1998). *Identifying and assessing gifted and talented bilingual Hispanic students*. ERIC Digest. Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 423 104)

Cattell, R. B., & Cattell, K. S. (1965). *Manual for the Culture-Fair Intelligence Test*. Champaign, IL: Institute for Personality and Ability Testing.

Clark, B. (1997). *Growing up gifted* (5th ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Coleman, L. J., & Cross, T. L. (2001). Being gifted in school: An introduction to development, guidance, and teaching. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

De Leon, J., & Argus-Calvo, B. (1997). *A model program for identifying culturally and linguistically diverse rural gifted and talented students.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 406 125)

Drummond, R. J. (2000). *Appraisal procedures for counselors and helping professionals* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Lewis, J. D., & Michaelson Grippin, R. (2000). *Screening for gifted: Identifying diverse students.* University of Nebraska at Kearney. Unpublished data.

Naglieri, J. A. (1996). *Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test-directions for administering.* San Antonio, TX: Harcourt Brace.

Nasca, D. (1988). *The use of non-verbal measures of intellectual functioning in identifying gifted children.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 296 551)

Raven, J. C., Court, J. H., & Raven, J. (1996). *Manual for Raven's Progressive Matrices and Vocabulary Scales.* Oxford, UK; Oxford Psychologists' Press.

Spicker, H., Fletcher, R., Montgomery, D., & Breard, N. (1993, March). Rural gifted education in a multicultural society. In Montgomery, D. (Ed.) *Rural America: Where all innovations begin.* Conference Proceedings of the American Council for Rural Special Education, Savannah, GA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 359 005)

Spicker, H. H., Southern, W. T., & Davis, B. I. (1991). The rural gifted child. In R. Jenkins-Friedman, E. S. Richert, & J. F. Feldhusen (Eds.). *Special populations of gifted learners: A book of readings* (pp. 92-98). Unionville, NY: Trillium Press.

Stephen, K., Kiger, L., Karnes, F. A., & Whorton, J. E. (1999). Use of nonverbal measures of intelligence in identification of culturally diverse gifted students in rural areas. *Perceptual Motor Skills, 88*, 793-796.

Multicultural

Patricia J. Peterson
Karen Sealander
Mina Burris
Lena Gaddis

Northern Arizona University
Box 5774
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

Elizabeth Garza
Julie Ledezma
Guadalupe Ullery

Somerton School District
Somerton, AZ 85350

CREATING RURAL CULTURALLLY DYNAMIC CLASSROOMS: CULTURALLY LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE EXCEPTIONAL STRATEGIES AND CURRICULUM MATERIALS

Need to Create Rural Culturally Dynamic Classrooms for Culturally Linguistically Diverse Exceptional (CLDE) Students

The number of children born to ethnic and language minority families is increasing every year. By 2,000 the U.S. will have 260 million people, and one of every three will be African-American, Hispanic, or Asian-American (Yates & Ortiz, 1991). Dramatic changes are taking place in America's public schools and today's educators must be prepared to teach students who are more likely to be a member of racial or ethnic groups (Voltz, Dooley & Jefferies, 1999). To appropriately serve the growing CLDE population in the country, it is essential that regular and special education teachers are provided additional training with a multicultural focus (Fletcher, Bos & Johnson, 1999). The National Center for Educational Statistics estimates that there are 9.2 million school age students in the U. S. whose primary language is not English. Estimating that 10.7% to 15% of these students may have disabilities, then 984,400 to 1,380,000 students with disabilities are also linguistically diverse (Baca & Cervantes, 1998). Presently, there are not enough qualified professionals in special education to serve culturally and linguistically different students. "{T}he representation of minority individuals in the special education teaching force does not reflect the ethnic diversity of students in America's public schools." (Cook and Boe, 1995, p. 71). Wald (1996) reports 86% of special education teachers are white, 10% black, 2% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and .7% Native American compared to compares the breakdown of special education students by ethnicity: 68% white,16% black,12% Hispanic,3% Asian, and1% Native American.

The single largest group of non-English background children in the U.S. is Hispanic. Of the LEP population, 75% of these children are native Spanish speakers (Baca & Cervantes, 1998). In Arizona, as of the 1990 census, there are over 688,338 Hispanics making up 18.8% of the population. In addition, a disproportionately high number of students with disabilities in states like Arizona are Hispanic. Hispanic families are poorer than average in these states, they tend to be more mobile than Anglo families, and they drop out of school three times as often as Anglo children (Gunderson, 1991). In Arizona many Hispanic families work on agricultural farms, and their migrant lifestyles often mitigate against successful school careers.

According to the last U.S. Census, about 5.6% of the nation's citizens are Native Americans. Cummings (1993) suggested that ". Institutions of higher education are not especially supportive of Native American persons and generally make few efforts to accommodate their unique personal as well as professional needs" (p. 12). In the state of Arizona, there are 21 Native American Tribal Nations. The 1998-1999 Arizona summary of pupil enrollment (excluding Bureau of Indian Affairs-BIA schools) indicates that 49,706 Native American students are enrolled in Arizona public schools. This enrollment is substantially higher when BIA students are also considered. Often school districts charged to serve Native American students are faced with an inability to attract well trained special education personnel for reservation-based schools due to perceived living conditions and travel distances. The majority of teachers in reservation schools are typically non-Native American, first-year teachers. For example, the Navajo Nation reported employing 1,128 teachers in the 1998-99 school year and only 321 of these teachers were Navajo. "Training for American Indians remains the area of greatest need in special education staffing for the ninth consecutive year" (OSEP, p. 27, 1998). The Navajo Nation is one example in which special education training for general education teachers, especially those familiar with the Navajo culture and language would be very beneficial. According to the 1998-1999 Statistics on Navajo (Diné) Education (Izzo, 1999), 823 certified special education teachers are employed and only 87 or 11% of these certified teachers are Navajo. Non-Native American teachers typically do not teach for more than three years on the reservation. Thus, high teacher turnover rates create problems with program development and continuity. Conversely, Native American teachers typically remain in their Native communities because of cultural and family systems. Unfortunately, recruitment efforts on the part of university training programs have yielded relatively few Native American individuals pursuing careers in special education in traditional campus-based programs.

When special education teachers from traditional university programs are hired on the reservation, they have little or no specialized training in the area of best practice in assessment, curriculum, and methods for Native American children and adolescents. Using standardized instruments to assess the eligibility and classification of culturally/linguistically diverse students for special education services has been found by many researchers to be biased (Baca & Cervantes, 1998; Common & Frost, 1990; Miller-Jones, 1989; and Ruiz & Figueroa, 1995). Language and culture variables must be factored into standardized testing to limit assessment bias. It is critical that the professionals administering and interpreting assessment results are fluent in the student's culture and language as well as competent in the area of Bilingual Multicultural Special Education. In many areas of the country, Native Americans are over represented in special education services by 50 percent (Gritzmacher & Gritzmacher, 1995) and underrepresented in Gifted and Talented Education programs by 100 percent (Romero, 1994) because professionals are unaware of the effects language and culture have on assessment. Thus, the assessment process and resulting educational diagnosis, placement, and programming decisions may be severely compromised. Arizona has a total of 220,493 Hispanic and Native American students. If 12% of these students are identified as needing Special Education services, then Arizona needs to serve 26,452 Hispanic & Native American CLDE students, and in Arizona currently there are very few Special Education teachers who also hold endorsements in Bilingual Education or ESL.

General and special education teachers need to be trained in collaborative inclusive techniques, non-biased identification and assessment procedures, use of culturally and linguistically appropriate methods and materials, as well as how to work with parents of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Arreaga-Mayer, Carta, & Tapia, 1995; Baca & Cervantes, 1998; Dean, Salend, & Taylor, 1993; Garcia & Malkin, 1993; Gonzalez, Brusca-Vega, & Yawkey, 1997; Holiday, Bitseedy, & Wheeler-Russell, 1995; and Ruiz & Figueroa, 1995).

Providing Rural Teachers with Training to Work Effectively with CLDE Students & Families

Fradd and Bermudez (1991) stress the need for improving instruction for CLDE students. They note the challenge of matching instructional and assessment approaches with the process of second-language learning to facilitate instruction for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students with disabilities. Baca and Cervantes (1998) reviewed the research and found one of the key factors that determines the degree to which the needs of CLDE children are met is the preparation or lack of preparation of teachers to be responsive to the unique needs of these students and to be more sensitive to their cultural heritage. Besides student learning, the area of curriculum and instruction materials is directly affected by culture. Thus, the contents of instructional materials as well as the instructional strategies must be presented in culturally appropriate ways (Bruns & Fowler, 1999; Patterson, 1996). In the past, instructional materials have not drawn from the cultural and linguistic experiences relevant to multicultural exceptional children; instead the categories of exceptionality have been regarded as the basic variable for curriculum differentiation (Gollnick & Chinn, 1994).

The availability of teacher training materials, textbooks, as well as bibliographies whose focus is on multicultural exceptional children is inadequately represented or virtually non-existent when compared to the percent of special education curriculum programs (Dean, Salend, & Taylor, 1993; Garcia & Malkin, 1993; Gollnick & Chinn, 1994; Salend, Dorney, & Mazo, 1997). In a study of the literature in this area, 29,704 citations in the ERIC database were reviewed. Only 937 articles or 3% are focused on the topic of multicultural education (Sorenson, 1991).

Assessment and potential for misdiagnosis of minority or culturally diverse children have long been a controversy in the fields of education and psychology. There have been landmark cases (eg. Diana v. State Board of Education, 1970; Mattie v. Holladay, 1979; Larry P. v. Riles, 1979, 1984; NAACP v. State of Georgia, 1985) which have greatly impacted the nature of assessment practices for groups of children from culturally diverse backgrounds. Figueroa, Fradd, and Correa (1989) offer a detailed account of the factors contributing to problems underlying the referral/assessment process for minority children based on a review of the literature by the Handicapped Minority Research Institute. Factors identified include that a) language proficiency is not given enough emphasis in the assessment process, b) testing is done primarily in English, c) test results for second language learners are misinterpreted as handicaps, d) learning and communication disabilities classification for minority students have now replaced the classification of educable mentally retarded that was used extensively in the 1960s and 1970s, e) home data are not used in the assessment, f) the same few tests are used for most children, and g) re-evaluations usually lead to continued special education classification.

The literature supports the integrated bilingual/multicultural special education (BMSE) model of a bilingual special education program (Baca & Cervantes, 1997; Fradd & Bermudez, 1991; Gonzalez, Brusca-Vega, & Yawkey, 1997; Yates & Ortiz, 1991). The integrated BMSE model is used when a single bilingual/multicultural special educator provides bilingual/multicultural special education services.

CLDE Competencies

In order to develop culturally dynamic classrooms utilizing culturally and linguistically appropriate methods and curriculum materials, teachers of CLDE students should demonstrate mastery of the following competencies in addition to the teaching of subject matter: (a) developing an understanding of how their own cultural perspective affects the teaching/learning relationship and the educational process, (b) developing an atmosphere in which cultural differences can be explored at various levels, (e.g., cognitive, affective), (c) using the cultural experiences of students and parents to generate authentic cultural perspectives in the curriculum, (d) using teaching strategies that are congruent with the students' different learning styles, (e) demonstrating the ability to scrutinize assessment practices for test bias, (f) developing an understanding that every culture has its integrity, validity, and coherence; (g) developing the students' knowledge of themselves, building their self-esteem and their capacity to appreciate and deal with differences in other students; and (h) developing effective strategies for working with culturally diverse families so as to enhance their participation in the implementation of individualized educational programs (Baca & Cervantes, 1998; Benavides, 1980; Garcia & Malkin, 1993; Yates & Ortiz, 1991).

Developing CLDE Strategies and Curriculum Materials

In many cases, effective strategies which have been used successfully with the general population of students with disabilities can easily be adapted to fit the needs of CLDE students. For example, the following strategies suggested by Sealander, Bell, Akin-Little, Shade, Peterson, and Prater (2000) can be enhanced by including a cultural and/or linguistic component to the strategy or curriculum material.

1. Word Bank procedure involves putting words on index cards and when the student correctly identifies the word on three consecutive days, then the word can be put into the student's personal word bank. Cultural/Linguistic Adaptation: Simply use words from the CLDE student's cultural background and community environment in both English and the native language, depending on which language or languages the child is learning. Example: A Navajo child might have the words hogan, Dine, sheep, mutton, clan, and Mother Earth in his/her bank of word cards. These words would then be used in content lessons, creative writing, spelling, and math activities to bring them into the child's frame of reference and reinforce decoding and comprehension.

2. Matching Pictures to Descriptive Phrases is a good technique for assisting students in reading comprehension and involves cutting pictures from magazines or catalogues and pasting them on individual file cards. Next a descriptive phrase related to each picture is pasted on separate file cards, and the student matches the pictures with the descriptions. Cultural/Linguistic Adaptation: The pictures would relate directly to the student's culture and language background. Example: A Mexican-American child might have pictures of a pinata, outdoor market, mother making tortillas, or the Three Kings accompanied by descriptive sentences for each picture in English and Spanish.

3. Creating Scrapbooks and Using the Language Experience Approach are excellent ways to involve the child actively in the learning process. Using Language Experience involves having the child dictate stories about real life experiences such as field trips, family celebrations, shopping at the grocery store, and traveling to visit relatives. Then the teacher writes the child's story on chart paper and the teacher and child read back the story together. Scrapbooks can be easily made by the child to illustrate significant parts of the story. Cultural Adaptation: The stories and experiences would relate to the CLDE student's native language and cultural background. For example, a Mexican-American child might tell a story about making a pinata for her sister's upcoming birthday party. The story could be told and written in Spanish, and then perhaps retold and written in English.

4. Using Cultural Heritage Books (Sealander, Blasi, Bell, Shellady, Carey, & Applequist, 2000) is another effective way to directly involve students with disabilities in their school activities. Cultural Adaptation: This approach builds in a natural way for CLDE students to find books that represent their own cultural heritage, customs, beliefs, and language through the books which the teacher chooses to use with the students. Many books are now available in two languages such as Navajo/English, Hopi/English, or Spanish/ English with beautiful illustrations to accompany the narrative depicting cultural history, customs, and events familiar to the CLDE child.

5. Sealander et al. (2000) also suggest Having Students Create a Picture Autobiography/Timeline which would include the child's birthdate, family, friends, important events, favorite books, goals, and special activities. Cultural Adaptation: Have the CLDE student create this timeline/autobiographical picture of himself/herself in the native language or using important words in the native language with a special focus on events significant in his/her culture. Example: A Navajo child might include spending the summer at a sheep camp with his grandmother herding sheep, going to a puberty ceremony for his sister, and building a hogan for family or clan members.

Strategies to Integrate Culture and Language from Rural Teachers of CLDE Students

In asking current teachers who work with CLDE students what makes their classrooms "culturally dynamic", the responses provide many useful ideas for other teachers of CLDE students. "It's the students that spend time here that make my classroom culturally dynamic" states Cynthia Robbins (Personal Communication, Jan. 30, 2001). She teaches Navajo and Hopi students in Tuba City, Arizona on the Navajo reservation, and she cites the following activities which she finds most effective in teaching CLDE students : 1. Arrange the room and curricula to accommodate the academic needs, personalities, and learning styles of the students, 2. Provide a print- and picture-rich classroom including a variety of colorful and descriptive maps, Navajo and English alphabet trains, the Four Sacred Mountains of the Navajo, Hopi and Navajo Clan charts, cooperative learning standards (both pictures and words), and Native American artwork, 3. Discuss Native American clans and determine clan relationships within this classroom, 4. Use Navajo conversational language to the greatest extent possible and encourage students to speak their native languages, 5. Observe cultural do's and don't's to the maximum extent possible (don't bring snakes into a classroom with Navajo children, practice appropriate cultural behavior during a solar eclipse, etc.), 7. Create a thematic unit on traditional Navajo dwellings (themes: Adaptation, Community, Culture, Diversity), and 8. Include modifications to promote success such as sometimes having a student complete an assessment orally rather than through writing to honor the oral traditions of the culture.

Jeanette Honanie (Personal Communication, Jan. 25, 2001), who is of Hopi background herself, shares the following insights about teaching Native American students with special education needs: 1. Capitalize on Hopi and Navajo children's ability to see things artistically and visually, 2. Focus on their abilities not their disabilites, 3. Integrate their abilities and cultural experiences into reading, math, social studies, and science, and 4. Use manipulatives and pair academics with visual-kinesthetic-tactile activities such as reading-drawing about a story or content lesson.

Summary

There is a great need for all teachers to create culturally dynamic classrooms to provide an active, stimulating environment in which students with and without disabilities can learn. Even more, when looking at students with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, it is crucial for teachers to develop strategies and curriculum materials which focus on the strengths of CLDE students' rich language and cultural heritage. From the examples which have been provided, it is easy to see that an effective teaching strategy or material can easily be adapted to fit the culture, language, and community experience of the CLDE child. This will not only enrich and enhance the child's learning and self concept, but along the way, it will also enrich the teacher!

References

Arreaga-Mayer, C., Carta, J.J., & Tapia, Y. (1995). Ecobehavioral assessment: A new methodology for evaluating instruction for exceptional culturally and linguistically diverse students. In Garcia, S.B. (Ed.) Addressing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Special Education: Issues and Trends.

Baca, L., & Cervantes, H. (1998). The bilingual special education interface. (3rd ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Bruns, D.A. & Fowler, S.A. (1999). Culturally sensitive transition plans. Teaching Exceptional Children, 31 (5), 26-30.

Common R.W. & Frost L.G. (1990). The implications of the mismeasurement of Native students' intelligence through the use of standardized intelligence tests. Canadian Journal of Native Education,15, 19-30.

Cook, L.H. & Boe, E.E. (1995). Who is teaching students with disabilities? Teaching Exceptional Children, 28 (1), 70-72.

Dean, A.V., Salend, S.J. & Taylor, L. (1993). Multicultural education: A challenge for special educators. Teaching Exceptional Children, 26 (1), 40-43.

Figueroa, R.A., Fradd, S., & Correa, V. (1989). Meeting the multicultural needs of the Hispanic students in special education [Special Issue]. Exceptional Children, 56 (6).

Fletcher, T.V., Bos, C.S. & Johnson, L.M. (1999). Accommodating English language learners with language and learning disabilities in bilingual education classrooms. Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 14 (2), 80-91.

Fradd, S., and Bermudez, A. (1991). POWER: A process for meeting the instructional needs of handicapped language minority students. Teacher Education and Special Education, 14 (11), 19-24.

Garcia, S.B. & Malkin, D.H. (1993). Toward defining programs and services for culturally and linguistically diverse learners in special education. Teaching Exceptional Children, 26 (1), 52-58.

Gollnick, D.M. & Chinn, P. (1995). Multicultural education in a pluralistic society, (4th ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Gonzalez, V., Brusca-Vega, R., Yawkey, T. (1997). Assessment and instruction of culturally and linguistically diverse students with or at-risk of learning problems: From research to practice. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Gritzmacher, H.L. & Gritzmacher, S.G. (1995). Referral assessment and placement practices used in rural school districts with Native American students in special education. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 14 (1), 11-19.

Holiday, L., Bitseedy, W., & Wheeler-Russell, G. (1995). Through Navajo eyes: Curriculum guidelines from a teacher's perspective. Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners, 1 (1), 50-54.

Izzo, R. (1997). Statistics on Navajo (Diné) Education. Window Rock, AZ: Navajo Division of Education.

Miller-Jones, D. (1989). Culture and testing. American Psychology, 44 (2), 360-365.

Office of Special Education Programs 20th Annual Report to Congress on Implementation (1998) Washington DC: US Department of Education.

Patterson, C.H. (1996). Multicultural counseling: From diversity to universality. Journal of Counseling and Development, 74, 227-231.

Romero, M.E. (1994). Identifying giftedness among Keresan Pueblo Indians: The Keres study. Journal of American Indian Education, 35-57.

Ruiz, N.T. & Figueroa, R.A. (1995). Learning-handicapped classrooms with Latino students: The optimal learning environment (OLE) project. Education and Urban Society, 27 (4), 463-483.

Salend, S., Dorney, J., & Mazo, M. (1997), The rules of bilingual special education in creating inclusive classrooms. Remedial and Special Education, 18 (1), 54-62.

Sealander, K., Bell, R., Akin-Little, A., Shade, R., Peterson, P., & Prater, G. (2000). Practical suggestions for teachers and parents: A list of behavioral, social, and academic interventions and recommendations. The School Psychologist, 54 (1), 1-2, 4-6.

Sealander, K., Blasi, M., Bell, R., Shellady, S., Carey, L., & Applequist, K. (2000). Sharing successess: Practical interventions for parents and teachers. The Journal of the International Association of Special Education, 3 (2), 31-43.

Voltz, D.L., Dooley, E. & Jefferies, P. (1999). Preparing special educators for cultural diversity: How far have we come? Teacher Education and Special Education, 22 (1), 66-77.

Wald, J. (1996). Culturally and linguistically diverse professionals in special education: A graphic analysis. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Yates, J.R., and Ortiz, A.A. (1991). Professional development needs of teachers who serve exceptional language minorities in today's schools. Teacher Education and Special Education, 14 (11), 11-18.

Lena R. Gaddis, Patricia Peterson,
& Karen Sealander
Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, AZ

Jeanette Honanie, Cynthia Robbins
Tonya Tso, & Helen Stalnaker
Tuba City Public Schools
Tuba City, AZ

PREPARING RURAL INCLUSIVE MULTICULTURAL EDUCATORS TO TEACH MEXICAN-AMERICAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

Among the challenges that special educators face in the new miilenium are increased numbers of students with disabilities and students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) (Sealander, Eigenberger, Peterson, Shellady, & Prater, In Press). The shortage of qualified teachers in rural and remote areas of our nation, as well as lack of qualified teachers from underrepresented groups such as Native Americans and Mexican Americans, have long been identified as complicating factors in provision of quality service CLD students (Cook & Boe, 1995; Massey & Crosby, 1983; Marrs, 1984; Hofmeister, 1984; Towson & Bening, 1987; Martin, 1990; Cook & Boe,1995).

While IDEA 1997 is designed to effectively serve all students with disabilities, there still exists a documented shortage of qualified special education teachers in our schools (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 1999). According to Benner (1998) a national shortage has continued to occur over the past decade. Likewise, a 1999 Arizona Department of Education study concluded special education teachers in rural areas of Arizona are especially difficult to recruit and retain (Solop & Hagen, 1999). While 42% of special education administrators felt recruitment and retention of special education teachers was a significant problem, rural school districts were more likely to cite this as the primary problem than were urban administrators. Over 60% of special education administrators indicated universities were not producing enough certified teachers to meet the demand for existing and new special education teaching positions.

Two significant factors influencing the teacher shortage are: 1) the increasing population of preschool and school age students needing special education services (U.S. Dept of Ed., 1998), and 2) the high attrition rate of special education teachers (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995; Anderson & Baker, 1999). The national shortage of special education teachers and general education teachers with training in special education is especially critical in rural areas (Westling & Whitten, 1996). Two major factors exacerbate this problem. First, most of the teachers who relocate to teach in these areas are unfamiliar/uncomfortable with the challenges of the rural multicultural classroom and rarely stay long. Second, many of the individuals familiar with these types of classrooms (individuals from the community) lack the resources and accessibility to courses needed to obtain their special education teaching certificate. Non-Native American teachers typically do not teach for more than three years on the reservation. Thus, high teacher turnover rates create problems with program development and continuity. Conversely, Native American teachers typically remain in their Native communities because of cultural and family systems. Unfortunately, recruitment efforts on the part of university training programs have yielded relatively few Native American individuals pursuing careers in special education in traditional campus-based programs. Westling and Whitten (1996) note the lack of accessibility to higher education programs needed to obtain teaching credentials by those individuals familiar with the types of classrooms and needs encountered in the rural and remote areas. For example, paraprofessionals in the local schools might make excellent teachers, but it is virtually impossible for them to leave their families and their jobs to travel to a university town, devoting 2 to 4 years of their life earning a degree. Yet, these individuals are the very people who should be teaching in such classrooms because they are familiar with the culture, language, and unique needs that accompany living in remote areas.

Northern Arizona University's Center for Excellence in Education (NAU-CEE) has demonstrated commitment to solving identified problems in serving CLD children and adolescents with disabilities in rural and remote communities. Recognizing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional students of the state of Arizona, this paper will describe two federally funded training programs designed to enable local community members most familiar with the diverse needs of their school children to become special education teachers.

Developing Rural Exceptional-educators to Address Multicultural Students (DREAMS)

DREAMS is a partnership between NAU-CEE and the Tuba City and Yuma School Districts. The training program leads to a Bachelors degree and dual certification in elementary and special education. The program is funded for three years, over which two cohorts of students will complete the program. This will result in a total of 58 bilingual/multicultural special education teachers in the state. The first cohort began the program during spring semester 1999.

A Project Manager will oversee the educational programs at the two sites, and serve as the on-site professor in Tuba City and Yuma, teaching 4 courses each semester. This individual will alternate semesters of residence in these communities. Additionally, the Project Manager will supervise the pratica and coordinate the delivery of instruction by other NAU faculty as guest lecturers.

Students will be drawn from three distinct pools. First, a group of 18 students will be selected from the Flagstaff campus; these students are referred to as "field-based," as they will participate in immersion experiences in Native American and Mexican American communities, as well as receive instruction in both Tuba City and Yuma. The remaining 40 students will be chosen from groups of paraprofessionals in each of the partnering school districts. Twenty will be selected from each district. Tuba City is on the Navajo Reservation and bordering the village of Moenkopi on the Hopi Reservation; thus, the vast majority of school children of either Navajo or Hopi descent. Yuma is located in the extreme southwestern part of Arizona on the borders of California and Mexico; a high percentage of the pupil population is Hispanic. Choice of paraprofessionals ensures participation by representatives of the high poverty rural communities in which there are shortages of teachers that serve a high proportion of CLD students. All students will receive financial assistance in the form of tuition, books, and computer equipment.

DREAMS students will participate in several unique training experiences. First, students will spend four hours a day, five days a week gaining practica experiences in classrooms. Concurrently, the students carry a full load of academic courses. Courses are delivered either by live instruction in classrooms provided by the participating school districts or via Interactive Instructional Television (IITV). Two new courses have been developed for the DREAMS project. Both are focused on the specific needs of culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional student. One course will address assessment issues and techniques, while the other will concentrate on methods, materials and interventions.

Another unique feature of the program is the cultural and immersion opportunities. The field-based students will live one semester in each of the participating communities. Additionally, all students will participate in orientation/immersion programs. In the fall semester, these programs will take place on the Navajo and Hopi reservations. During the spring, students will participate in a two-week Spanish Immersion Program during which they will live with Mexican families and enroll in intense Spanish instruction classes.

Bilingual Rural Inclusive Development for General and Exceptional-educators (BRIDGE)

BRIDGE is a graduate-training program, which may be viewed as an extension of DREAMS. It too is a partnership program with Tuba City and Yuma school districts.
Like DREAMS, participants receive financial assistance with tuition, books, and technical assistance. The goals of the project are ambitious and include (a) to train master teachers with expertise in high-incidence disabilities among Mexican American and Native American children, (b) prepare leaders in the field of bilingual special education, (c) to ease the shortage of special educators to work with CLD students in the state, and (d) preparation and dissemination of culture-specific curriculum materials.

BRIDGE is also a federally funded project, in which 40 students will receive masters degrees. The project, which began during the fall semester 2000, will recruit and enroll bachelors level general or special education teachers over the 3-year funding period. The students will be divided into two cohorts, consisting of 10 students from each Tuba City and Yuma. Requirements for participants include a bachelors degree in either elementary of special education and some degree of fluency in Spanish, Navajo, or Hopi language (the groups of focus in this project).

With the assistance of Faculty Mentors (professor from the home campus in Flagstaff), Language Facilitators (native language speakers), and Language Editors, the cohorts will develop bilingual curriculum materials complete with accommodations for children with a variety of high-incidence disabilities. A web-site will be developed in order to facilitate wide dissemination of these materials.

An Inclusive Collaborative Trainer-of-Trainers model will be an integral part of the BRIDGE project. Using this model, the students will engage in training activities in which they will prepare and conduct interactive training seminars. These seminars will be scheduled each semester, with a full-day training session serving as the culminating experience for the students. Over the course of the three-year period, it is estimated that over 700 educators will receive training through the TOT seminars.

Summary

There is a well-established need for appropriately trained teacher to work with an ever-growing population of culturally and linguistically diverse children in remote rural vicinities. This need is particularly evident for special educators. A decade of survey data have revealed extreme national and state shortages of credentialed special education teachers, numerous unfilled positions, and scores of exceptional children un- or under-served. This paper has provided descriptions of two projects, one undergraduate and one masters level, designed to assist in remedying these problems. Together these programs will prepare 98 special education teachers (58 bachelor-level and 40 master-level) equipped to work in some of the most isolated areas of Arizona. Also contained within the design of the projects were efforts to increase the probability that these teachers will be retained in these rural areas. A vast majority of the students that have and will be recruited for both programs are from the communities in which the participating school districts are located; they live there, have roots and family there, know the culture and language, and are committed to the communities. Both DREAMS and BRIDGE allow these "homegrown" individuals to earn degrees in their local communities, increasing the likelihood that they would stay and seek certification and employment in the local schools. Follow up data on similar training partnerships with NAU-CEE have revealed that not only have the graduates been retained in rural areas, but they are serving as leaders and mentors in their school districts (Thornton, Tams, & Peterson, 1998). Program evaluation is an integral part of any training program. The principal investigators look forward to carrying out the evaluation activities of the DREAMS and BRIDGE projects and disseminating that data in future reports.

References

Anderson, P. L. & Baker, B. K. (1999). A case-based curriculum approach to special education teacher Preparation. Teacher Education and Special Education, 22(3), 188-192.

Benner, S. (1998). Special education issues within the context of American society. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Cook, L.H. & Boe, E.E. (1995). Who is teaching students with disabilities? Teaching Exceptional Children, 28 (1), 70-72.

Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (1995). What's "special" about special education? Phi Delta Kappan, 76, 522-530.

Hofmeister, A. (1984). Tools for rural special education. Exceptional Children, 4, 344-350.

Marrs, L. (1984). A bandwagon without music: Preparing special educators. Exceptional Children, 4, 334-342.

Martin, B. (1990). Needed: Special education. Rural Education Quarterly, 3, 111-119.

Sealander, K., Eigenberger, M, Peterson, P., Shellady, S., & Prater, G. (In Press). Challenges facing teacher educators in rural, remote, and isolated areas: Using what we know and we have learned. Rural Special Education Quarterly.

Solop, H. L., & Hagan, K. (1999). Special Education Personnel Needs Survey. Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University.

Massey, S., & Crosby, J. (1983). Special problems, special opportunities: Preparing teachers for rural schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 65, 265-269.

Thornton,.M., Tams, K, & Peterson, P. (1998, April). Effective Strategies for Developing Inclusion Programs for Rural Culturally/Linguistically Diverse Schools, Paper presented at the 1998 National Conference of the Council for Exceptional Children, Minneapolis, MN.

U S. Department of Education (1998). Twentieth annual report of Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act.. Washington, D. C.: Author.

Westling, D.L. and Whitten, T.M. (1996). Rural special education teachers' plans to continue or leave their teaching positions. Exceptional Children, 62 (4), 319-335.

Connie Heimbecker
Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson
Bernita Nelson
Jody Smith
Marsha Whitehair
Mary H. Begay
Brian Bradley
Armanda Gamble
Nellie McCarty
Catherine Medina
Jacob Nelson
Bobbie Pettigrew
Karen Sealander
Maria Snyder
Sherri White
Denise Redsteer
Greg Prater

Northern Arizona University
Center for Excellence in Education
PO Box 5774
Flagstaff, Arizona
86011

RURAL NAVAJO STUDENTS IN KAYENTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT'S SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS: THE EFFECTS OF HOME LOCATION AND LANGUAGE

Introduction

The Navajo Nation, the largest reservation within the United States, is equivalent to the size of West Virginia. In fact, "Diné Bikeyah, or Navajoland, is larger than 10 of the 50 states in America" (Navajo Nation Tourism, 2000). The Reservation covers 27,000 square miles, extending into three states: Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. Approximately 250,000 Navajos reside on the Reservation which had been described as a vast land unique because the people "have achieved something quite rare: the ability of an indigenous people to blend both traditional and modern way of life" (Navajo Nation Tourism, 2000, p.3).

The Navajo Nation's tribal government was established in 1923 and has evolved into the largest and most sophisticated form of American Indian Government in the United States. The Nation has focused on retaining and passing on the unique cultural legacy to future generations. During the Second World War, the Navajo language and people played a vital role when the Navajo Code Talkers developed a secret code that was undecipherable by enemy forces. The efforts of the Code Talkers contributed to the United States success in the War, especially in the Pacific Theater.

Kayenta, Arizona is the home of the Kayenta Unified School District (KUSD). Kayenta is located on the Navajo Reservation just twenty-one miles southwest of Monument Valley Tribal Park. Monument Valley is often described as the seventh wonder of the world. Kayenta is one of the Navajo Nation's largest communities with a population of 6500. It is the first reservation community in the USA to be incorporated as a township with a municipal tax base. The community has hotels, gas stations, a shopping plaza, laundromats, a large clinic, police station, fire station, post office, movie theater, women's shelter, car wash, restaurants, municipal offices, and a recreation center. It is surrounded by sandstone rock formations, mesas (a large rock plateau), volcanic rock outcrops, as well as grazing land for sheep, cows and horses.

Kayenta Unified School District has a current student enrollment of 2,626 ranging from grades kindergarten to twelve. Many students reside in the Kayenta community but many are also bussed in from the surrounding countryside. It is not uncommon for some students attending KUSD to travel on the bus two hours one way. The KUSD home language surveys indicate that Navajo is the primary language spoken in 92% of the students' homes, although few of the students are considered truly fluent in speaking the Navajo language. When students enter school, a great number are not fluent in either English or Navajo.

KUSD also boasts a unique cooperative venture between the District and Northern Arizona University's Center for Excellence in Education (NAU-CEE). Reaching American Indian Special/Elementary Educators (RAISE) is a program dedicated to providing education leading to a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education. RAISE is funded in part by the Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) and allows program delivery to cohorts of students in their local communities who spend one and one-half years together (Sealander, Eigenberger, Peterson, Shellady, and Prater, in press).

RAISE has been described as a program transported to the reservation. This *transporting* enables local participants to complete a degree program while remaining with their families, retaining their jobs, and sustaining their support networks (Heimbecker, Minner, & Prater, 2000). The marriage of theory and practice set in the context of the primarily Navajo culture, strengths, and needs are important aspects in the cohort program. (Sealander, Eigenberger, Peterson, Shellady, and Prater, in press).

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to explore the potential relationship between Kayenta Unified School District Navajo students' home location, primary language spoken in the home, and involvement with the Special Education Program. We question whether students' who reside in extremely rural areas outside of Kayenta and have Navajo as a primary language, may be more likely to be assessed and placed in a special needs program than those students who reside in Kayenta and have English as a primary language. We wish to examine what other factors (i.e. the student's predominant culture) may have an influence on a student's placement in a special education program.

Our main objective is to present KUSD educators' (e.g. teachers and administrators) perspectives, beliefs, and opinions regarding factors they feel may be significant when considering a student's placement in a special education program. For example, survey questions are related to the role the student's home location, predominant culture, and language spoken at home may have played in a student's placement in the KUSD special education program. In addition, the District teachers' predominant culture and proficiency in English and Navajo were also explored. Professionals were asked whether they felt it was important to work in partnership with the student's families, and if so, how did KUSD achieve this.

Methodology

The data presented in this paper was collected by current members of the RAISE program under the supervision of their instructors from NAU-CEE. A 14-item questionnaire was developed and distributed to professionals in the KUSD. The selection process for recipients of the questionnaire included four categories of KUSD employees: 1) special education teachers, 2) special education department heads or former heads, 3) Navajo non-special education teachers and 4) Anglo non-special education teachers. Individuals from each category were selected from among the District's four different schools (primary school with grades K-2, intermediate school with grades 3-5, middle school with grades 6-9, and high school with grades 10-12). In addition, district level professionals were selected to include the Director of Special Education and two school psychologists. An attempt was made to balance both ethnic and gender variables. In addition to the questions asked demographic data to include ethnicity (Navajo and Anglo), professional status/ position, (e.g. teacher/grade, administrator), and gender were collected.

Twenty-seven questionnaires were distributed among KUSD teachers and employees, eliciting their perceptions, beliefs, and opinions regarding the placement of students in special education programs. Of the 27 questionnaires sent out 23 were returned for a return rate of 85%.

Survey Questions

- What factors may influence a student's placement in a Special Education program?
- In your opinion, does a student's primary language effect the assessment of a student being placed in the Special Education Program?
- Do you think there is a potential relationship between the student's home location, primary language spoken at home and involvement in the Special Education Program?
- Does a student's predominant culture have an influence on the student's placement into the Special Education Program?
- In your opinion, do you believe that a teacher's predominant culture and the teacher's proficiency in English and Navajo, might have an influence on their consideration of a student's placement in Special Education?
- Do you think that it is beneficial for teachers working with Navajo students on the Reservation to be aware that the school performance of some students may be influenced by where the child resides, the child's proficiency in English, the child's predominant culture, and other factors?
- Do you think that it is beneficial for teachers working with Native American students living off the Reservation or in urban centers, to be aware that the school performance of some students may be influenced by where the child had lived (reservation), the child's proficiency in English, the child's predominant culture, and other factors?
- Do you think it is important for teachers to work in a partnership with the student's families (home language and home culture), and how might this partnership affect a child being referred for placement in Special Education?
- Do you know if KUSD has developed and implemented intervention and inclusion programs as a growing partnership between teachers and families in the District?
- What are your thoughts concerning KUSD's efforts in getting teachers and families to work together in order to bridge the differences between the language and culture of the home, and the language and culture of the school?
- Is the bridge between the student's home and school important?
- In your opinion, do you think students from more rural areas face greater educational challenges than students from Kayenta?
- If yes, then what ideas might you have to better help rural students?
- Do you have any other opinions and beliefs resulting from this involvement?

Results

Returned questionnaires were evaluated by looking at the responses and identifying themes or patterns that emerged. The results are organized by question first followed by the themes or patterns.

1. What factors may influence a student's placements in a special education program?

Respondents felt that several factors influenced a student's placement in the Special Education program. They are: 1) developmental history (i.e. whether the child was born premature), 2) educational history (i.e. attendance, test results, etc.), 3) kind of disability or presenting problem (i.e. blindness, physical disabilities, emotional behavior, continued behavior problems, trauma), 4) family history, and 5) interventions, tests and evaluations.

While few educators indicated language was a factor in placing students into special education programs one respondent noted, "On the Navajo Reservation our rural population utilizes the Navajo language. Very few parents speak fluent English. Therefore their children come to school with limited English…I believe language can be a big factor."

2. In your opinion, does a student's primary language effect the assessment of a student being placed in the Special Education Program?

Responses to this question were equally split in three directions. One third of respondents answered "yes"- the language is taken into consideration. Another one third of respondents indicated that the language is not a factor in special education assessment. The remaining one third held mixed views about the role of language. As one KUSD educator stated, "Non-Navajo teachers who are not familiar with the Navajo way of life refer more dominant Navajo speaking students to the Special Education program because students require more response time and tend to struggle more with the English language (oral and written)."

3. ***Do you think there is a potential relationship between the student's home location, primary language spoken at home, and involvement in the Special Education Program?***

Most of the respondents agreed with the potential relationship between the students' home life and involvement in the Special Education program. They noted a child must be assessed in his or her dominant language using culturally relevant and familiar concepts. Some Navajo children have a lack of English language or exposure to vocabulary and many do not have modern appliances such as television, refrigerators, microwaves, etc.

The KUSD Special Education Director noted that the language and experiences at home along with the rural and remoteness of the home play major roles in the child's development. To that end the Director emphasized the importance of understanding the role educational disadvantage, socioeconomic status, and environmental differences play into the decisions regarding placement in special education programs. She noted that, "It is why it is important that the evaluator understands the whole child and at KUSD steps are taken to rule out language as a factor."

4. ***Does a student's predominant culture have an influence on the student's placement into the Special Education Program?***

Respondents were equally divided on this question with one half believing that predominant culture played a role in placement and one half believing it did not. All agreed that practices in KUSD prevented this from happening because culture as a factor is ruled out before placement in the Special Education program is suggested.

One teacher stated, "... in border town areas we get students who go to off reservation schools and end up in Special Education because of their cultural background and differences. However, when they come back to our district, we find many of the these students could have been served in the general education class and should not have been in special education."

Other respondents noted they did not think that, on average, the students culture played a role in placement in special education classes however, they believed it was more likely seen in the larger population areas and cities.

5. ***In your opinion, do you believe that a teacher's predominant culture and the teacher's proficiency in English and Navajo might have an influence on their consideration of a student's placement in special education?***

The majority responded they did not think that the teachers' culture and proficiency in English and Navajo had an influence on placement into special education. They noted that when referring a student for special education assessment, the multidisciplinary team reviews the student's educational history and related factors as it relates to educational environments. As with any referral, the teacher must document what interventions he/she has used with the child.

Eight of the respondents said they felt the more knowledgeable and sensitive a teacher is about the predominant culture coupled with proficiency in both Navajo and English, the better able he/she is to understand the student's abilities and support academic success.

6. ***Do you think it is beneficial for teachers working with Navajo students on the Reservation to be aware that the school performance of some students may be influenced by where the child resides, the child's proficiency in English, the child's predominant culture, and other factors?***

Respondents unanimously expressed strong feelings about a teacher's awareness of specific factors affecting the students' school performance. It was felt that generally their home location, proficiency in English, culture, and other factors influence Navajo students. More traditional parents believe that academics belong at school and culture and Native teachings belong at home. Factors that may hinder a student's educational success included limited access to computers, running water, and electricity.

One school psychologist suggested that incoming teachers should attend a workshop to familiarize themselves with the Navajo language, culture, and taboos. Respondents also showed a concern for other minority children, (not just Native American children), and a teacher's obligation to all students. As one respondent noted, "All teachers working on the Navajo Reservation, or working with any minority group, should learn about the population they will be working with. Isn't that part of being professional"?

7. ***Do you think that it is beneficial for teachers working with Native American students living off the Reservation or in urban centers, to be aware that the school performance of some students may be influenced by where the child has lived (reservation), the child's proficiency in English, the child's predominant culture, and other factors?***

Almost all respondents agree that when working with Navajo students off the Reservation (i.e. in urban schools), teachers need to have a genuine interest in the student. Even though non-Anglo children are likely in the minority at an urban school, it is vital that the teacher be culturally sensitive and accountable for every child.

Many respondents expressed a concern about the potential mislabeling of Navajo students, resulting in those students being mistakenly placed in special education. When a teacher understands the cultural background of a student, mislabeling is more often prevented. One special education department head that worked in a urban city school stated "Absolutely! That is why an ESL endorsement is important for teachers of students who are not in the majority culture [even] in off the reservation schools... I worked in [a reservation school] and they don't have any Navajo psychologists, so [only] Anglos assess the kids.

8. ***Do you think it is important for teachers to work in a partnership with the student's families (home language and home culture), and how might this partnership affect a child being referred for placement in special education?***

All of the people interviewed agreed that teachers and families working in partnership will affect a child being referred for a placement in special education. It was noted that parents bring a wealth of knowledge about their child and his/her background that teachers would not know without a partnership between the home and school.

Many teachers expressed difficulty in creating a partnership, especially in the higher grade levels. Moreover, they maintained that information acquired from parents is necessary for intervention strategies, accommodations, and adaptations to be implemented to better serve the students' needs. As one Navajo general education eighth grade teacher stated, "I believe teachers should work in a partnership with students' families. Unfortunately I have found it difficult (for whatever reason) to work with students' families no matter how high or low the student may perform academically. It seems as if the older a student is, the more difficult it is to attain a partnership." This teacher based her opinion on eight years of teaching experience at primary, intermediate and middle school grade levels, while sometimes working with the same students. She found that parents who were very involved when their children were primary students, became less involved when their children were middle school students.

9. ***Do you know if KUSD has developed and implemented intervention and inclusion programs as a growing partnership between teachers and families in the District?***

The majority of respondents enthusiastically responded "Yes"! However, a smaller number strongly disagreed expressing diverse views to support their opinions. Some who disagreed said that only when the teachers were trained in special education, did they know how to use inclusion effectively. Many respondents expressed a need for more special education personnel because there simply was not enough time for the current staff to assist all students with special needs. Interestingly, while a former head of special education in a lower grade level school was very supportive of the current inclusion program in KUSD, a former head of special education now at an upper grade school saw that some special education students' needs were clearly not being met with the current inclusion system.

Another respondent observed, "Yes, KUSD is the cream of the crop in comparison to other schools statewide". While others pointed out that, in their view, only physically challenged students were served in inclusive settings and students with more severe learning disabilities were not served in this inclusive setting. One respondent noted, "I did my own home visits during my own time."

10. What are your thoughts concerning KUSD's efforts in getting teachers and families to work together in order to bridge the differences between the language and culture of the home, and the language and culture of the school?

Most of the respondents commented that the KUSD needed to try harder and make more of an effort to get families and teachers to work together. Respondents felt that most of the barriers confronted involved the often long distances between student homes and schools, making it difficult for parents to come to the school for meetings, etc. The language and culture were not seen as obstacles to the District and family cooperation.

11. Is the bridge between the student's home and school important?

The majority of respondents agreed that a child's home situation does affect the child's academic success at school. Furthermore, what happens at school affects a child's home life. Consequently, the bridge between home and school is important. The school should not be solely responsible for making this bridge. The parents need to meet the school halfway and become involved in their child's schooling.

12. In your opinion, do you think students from more rural areas face greater education challenges than students from Kayenta?

Half of those surveyed felt students from rural areas face greater educational challenges due to great distances from school and long hours spent traveling on buses. However, the other half of our respondents disagreed with this stance stating that being from a rural area should not be a factor influencing a student's school success, nor should this be used as an "excuse" or "crutch". As one middle school teacher suggested, "It all depends on the individual student himself or herself because the opportunity is available to them [the student]."

13. If you answered yes (to question number 12), what ideas might you have to better assist rural students?

Those educators that felt rural students face greater challenges suggested that these students should read more and be assisted with additional supports such as extra teacher aides and home tutors to work with families. One school psychologist offered this excellent advice to rural students, "Don't make excuses, study hard, read more, be more dedicated, and dream."

14. Do you have any other opinions and beliefs resulting from this involvement?

The majority of respondents felt that increased parental involvement is needed within the educational system. In addition, a few educators suggested that more general education teachers need to have some training or certification in special education. "If you want your child to succeed in school, learning disability or not, take time to help your child. Provide encouragement, guidance and motivation."

Conclusion

Our preliminary research suggests that the Kayenta Unified School District is a model provider of Special Education Services for Native American students. Under the leadership of the KUSD Special Education Director, State and Federal special education laws and policies are enforced while at the same time being sensitive and aware of the Navajo culture, language, and lifestyle which affects every District student to varying degrees. With the help of KUSD school psychologists (who are Navajo) and other KUSD special education staff, special education assessments are contextualized, culturally sensitive, utilize both the Navajo and English languages, occur over an extended period of time, and are conducted by a multidisciplinary team including parents, classroom teachers, and medical specialists (occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech pathologists, etc.). Most importantly, the staff overall are both caring and professional.

In KUSD factors such as culture are quickly ruled out, allowing the team to move through the pre-referral, referral, and evaluation process with confidence. Even if cultural factors or influences were not identified at the pre-referral level they are always a consideration during the actual assessment process. It is because of cultural awareness and sensitivity the team is able to make decisions for placement in special education programs, confident that the student is indeed in need of these services –not placed because of cultural or language differences. At KUSD the chances are slim that a student is placed in special education as a result of a disadvantage in language proficiency or other factors such as predominant culture."

References

Heimbecker, C., Minner, S., & Prater, G. (2000). Canadian and American community based Native teacher education programs: A personal perspective. In Reyhner, J (Ed.), Learn In beauty: Indigenous education for a new century (pp. 35-44). Flagstaff, AZ. Northem Arizona University.

Navajo Nation Tourism (2000). Official Navajo Nation Visitor's Guide. Navajo Office of Economic Development. Window Rock, AZ

Sealander, K ., Eigenberger, M., Peterson, P., Shellady, S., and Prater, G. (in press). Challenges facing educators in rural, remote, and isolated areas: Using what we know and what we have learned. Rural Special Education Quarterly.

Marilyn Gilberts
Nebraska District #30
506 Belle Fourche Avenue
Chadron, NE 69337
amgilberts@hotmail.com

WHO ME?: THE DILEMMA OF RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER WORLD

Our mobile world is bringing about an increasingly diverse student body into our classrooms across the country. Data from the National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education (NCBE) as cited by Freeman and Freeman (2000), informs us that between 1989 and 2000, the general K-12 population grew by about 5.5 million students - a 13.6 percent increase. The English Language Learner (ELL), Limited English Proficient (LEP), or English as a Second Language (ESL) population grew from about 2 million to over 4 million - over 100 percent increase in the same period. No longer are the linguistically diverse students located only in the coastal states or even solely in large metropolitan areas. Though California, where 25 percent of the total K-12 population are ELLs, has the highest number of ELLs, its growth rate is not the highest. It is one of fourteen states whose ELL population grew between 50 to 100 percent from 1990 to 1997. In twelve states - including Alaska, Idaho, and Nebraska - ELL student numbers grew over 200 percent. Nine other states in the same period experienced a growth from 100 to 200 percent. Meeting the needs of the English language learner now is the challenge for all areas of the United States.

As a Spanish speaking family moves into a rural area of Nebraska because the father is hired for a job on a ranch, the children may be the only students for whom English is not the first language in the small school. A family may move off the reservation and enter a school somewhere in rural United States, and they are considered "limited English proficient" by the federal government's definition (as cited in Fitzgerald, 1995a). Another family from China opens a restaurant in a small town, and English is their second language. In none of the schools where the above children now attend are there teachers endorsed specifically to meet linguistic needs, so the special educators are turned to for advice.

Special education teachers have been trained to meet a variety of special needs, and they are accustomed to involving the family in determining the strengths and needs of a student. Parents can also be very helpful in working with ELLs. From the family, the teachers can learn about what the family values, if the child has gone to school and in what language, as well as much more. In addition, as the teachers begin to establish a relationship, they have an opportunity to validate what the child already knows. Knowing another language needs to be viewed as an asset, not a deficit. The language and cultural background need to be taken into account to insure a successful learning experience. Some of these issues are addressed in the Starter Kit for Primary Teachers (Appendix).

Theme of Balance

Special educators know the importance of finding methods and strategies that are sound and functional; not just popular. A call to balance comes through from several authors, as they urge educators to build on current reading research in first language as well as second language research (Fitzgerald, 1995a; Fitzgerald, 1995b;Grabe, 1991; Stahl et al.1998). In her research review of ESL reading instruction in the United States, Fitzgerald (1995a) uses rigorous criteria for the studies she includes. She groups the studies into four areas: descriptions of what goes on in the ESL classroom in reading instruction, instructional methods, role and timing of native-language reading instruction, and instructional materials. Fitzgerald recommends that all teachers of ESL students need to learn about current reading theories and sound instructional approaches. The consistency of direct-instruction studies across ESL and native-English speaking readers, suggests that instructional techniques found to be sound for the one group be implemented with the other group. In her review of 67 research reports in ESL cognitive reading processes, Fitzgerald (1995b) concludes that the findings imply that ESL teachers could follow sound principles of reading instruction based on current cognitive research done with native English speakers. Some evidence also pointed to some cognitive processing areas that might deserve extra attention in ESL learning situations in the United States. These included ESL learners' slower reading and fewer responses in reading situations; which suggest mainly that teachers might display more than normal patience, take care when wording questions and making interactive comments in order to maximize the opportunity of activating thought processes.

Another component of balance addresses the issue of incorporating strategies to improve word recognition while providing for the reading of meaningful, connected text (Adams, 1990). Stahl, Duffy-Hester, and Stahl (1998) in their examination of phonics, state that arriving at a balance in effective reading instruction involves considering the needs of the children. For example, they suggest that an effective first-grade program might involve elements associated with whole language as well as more direct instructional approaches. More specifically Stahl et al. mention that children entering first grade with a low literacy background may need more direct instruction to develop concepts other students may have learned through print-based home experiences with literacy. Stahl et al. make clear that research and common sense suggest principles of good phonics instruction. Good phonics instruction should: develop the alphabetic principle; develop phonological awareness; provide a thorough grounding in the letters; not teach rules, need not use worksheets, should not dominate instruction, and not have to be boring; provides sufficient practice in reading words; leads to automatic word recognition; and be part of reading instruction. In the many approaches to phonics that are reviewed, the focus is on making this phonics information available to children in whatever approach the teacher uses.

Theme of Vocabulary Development

Students who do well in school have larger vocabularies (Smith, 1941 and Shand, 1993 cited in Gunning, 1998). When people are beginning to learn a language, there are not very many words at their disposal. In the early grades, the emphasis is on learning to read and a certain amount of vocabulary is required. About fourth grade, the transition to reading to learn takes place and more academic vocabulary is needed rapidly. Vocabulary development is essential for English language learners because we know there is a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge in English and academic achievement (Saville-Troike, 1984). The best predictor of students' ability to understand text is their level of vocabulary (Maria, 1990 cited in Gunning, 1998). Unknown vocabulary was the major linguistic factor that adversely affected the Hispanic children's reading test performance (Garcia, 1991). Garcia discovered that more that 10% of the words used in a test passage were unknown to Hispanic students. The Hispanic students were attempting to read a text at their "frustration" level. When the text is at the frustration level, the student is neither fluent in reading the selection nor able to recall or understand textual information. Building the vocabularies of our ELL population is vital for their success.

The literature contains a variety of studies that suggest different ways to approach vocabulary development. Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) found that given the right kind of instruction before reading a selection, low-achieving readers did as well as bright students on a series of comprehension tasks. Vocabulary instruction needs to be thorough and deep according to Gunning (1998). Effective vocabulary instruction is characterized by three principles that can be used to modify and improve existing methods of teaching word meanings (Stahl, 1986). The first principal is to give both context and definition. The second is to encourage "deep" processing which leads to a person generating a novel product – using one's own words. The third principle involves giving multiple exposures.

In order for effective instruction to develop, guidelines for evaluating vocabulary instruction would be beneficial. Carr and Wixson (1986) offer four guidelines. First, they suggest that instruction should help students relate new vocabulary to their background knowledge. Secondly, they mention that instruction should help students develop elaborated word knowledge. Thirdly, they propose that instruction should provide for active student involvement in learning new vocabulary. Fourthly, they stress that instruction should develop students' strategies for acquiring new vocabulary independently.

A successful vocabulary program will employ a variety of methods (Readence, Bean, and Baldwin, 1998). Nagy, Herman, and Anderson (1985), administered a study to determine whether students do acquire measurable knowledge about unfamiliar words while reading natural text. The subjects included fifty-seven eighth-grade students of average and above average reading ability. They were given either an expository or narrative text of about 1000 words on length to read. Following the reading, the students completed two vocabulary assessment tasks on fifteen target words from each passage, an individual interview, and a multiple-choice test. The researchers believe the results demonstrate that learning from context does take place. The major result is the demonstration of learning from context from one or a very few exposures to unfamiliar words in natural text. The strength of learning from context lies in its long-term, cumulative effects. For educators at large, the results suggest that a moderate amount of reading, which a teacher can influence, will lead to substantial vocabulary gains.

Three methods of teaching word meaning, including the verbal and visual word association (keyword method), are compared in a study by Eeds and Cockrum, 1985. The first method, teacher interaction, taught target words by helping students expand an already existing conceptual network. The second method, dictionary, had students pair the words to be learned with dictionary definitions. The third (Control) had students read the words in a meaningful context of a junior novel. The fifth grade students involved in the study were from three classes in the same school in southwestern United States. Results showed the Teacher Interaction Group had the best vocabulary retention, followed by the Dictionary Group and then the Control Group. From this study four steps involved in the keyword method used in the teacher interaction, influence positively the acquisition of new vocabulary. These steps include the activating of the common experiences, the personal hookup of the new label to the individual experience, the contrast of the non-example, and the translation into personal language.

Hopkins and Bean (1998) provide a variation of the keyword strategy, as they present vocabulary learning with the verbal-visual word association strategy in a Native American community. The strategy is modified to use to teach roots and prefixes to work with junior high and high school students. The authors choose unknown vocabulary with prefixes or root words from text the students are working on in reading class. Modeling the drawing of a square, and dividing it into four smaller squares is the first step. In one square a prefix or root word is written. In the second, a definition is inserted. In the third square an example of a word using that prefix or root word is added. In the last square, a picture is drawn of the example. The teacher is encouraged to use a think-aloud procedure while modeling. The authors state that this strategy is particularly helpful with struggling readers in various culturally diverse classrooms.

Recently a study examined effects of the keyword (English and Spanish) method in comparison with the rehearsal method on the vocabulary learning of 60 LEP fifth-grade students in two schools in southwest United States (Zhang & Schumm, 2000). The researchers note that the keyword method is one of the most extensively studied mnemonic techniques applied to students' speed of acquisition, memorization, and comprehension. Sadoski and Paivio (1994), as cited by the researchers, speak of a Dual Coding Theory that pertains to previous experiences or prior knowledge, the basis from which mental representations derive. Experiences can be linguistic (related to language) and nonlinguistic (frequently referred to as processing imagery). The keyword strategy is applied in two stages. First, identify a concrete, easily imaged word, or a keyword that bears certain phonetic similarities to the word to be learned. Secondly, figure out a corresponding image or respond to an interactive picture provided. An example given is, the meaning of the English word, peavey, is "hook". The keyword, "pear" is found then a corresponding image or an interactive picture associating both the meaning "hook", and the keyword "pear", might be "a pear stuck on the end of a hook". In the process the student is making important cognitive associations between known and to be learned information. A major finding of the study was that the keyword method is highly effective for immediate vocabulary recall for LEP students. Secondly, the method was found to have certain retention effects on LEP students' recall of vocabulary definitions. Thirdly, the keyword method was found to be applicable to classroom instruction where LEP students are involved. Of significance is that the keyword method can help students become more strategic and independent learners. It is one tool for teaching students to make links between what they know and what they need to learn.

Dana and Rodriguez (1992), investigated whether a study system designed specifically for studying vocabulary would be more effective than student-selected study methods. The authors of the study developed a system that guided students to pretest their knowledge, organize their vocabulary words, anchor them in memory, practice them at prescribed intervals to facilitate retention, and perform an exit test. TOAST was the acronym used to cue students to the steps of the system of test, organize, anchor, say, and test. The students involved in this study were sixth graders from three classes in the Midwest. One class received instruction in the use of the TOAST study system while the other two classes were directed to select "their own best method" of studying. The results of the study indicated that the TOAST system was more effective in four ways: first, in improving students' recognition of definitions as measured by a multiple choice test; secondly in facilitating the generation of definitions as measured by a test where students needed to provide a definition from memory; thirdly, in mediating the formation of original sentences as measured by a test where students needed to generate their own sentences; and fourthly, in aiding retention of definitions over a one week period as measured by a multiple choice test. The authors suggest that TOAST offers a procedure for independent study of vocabulary to supplement classroom instruction.

Theme of Peer Involvement

Peers are often a neglected resource (Richard-Amato, 1992). A common complaint of ELLs is that they are left out or ignored. Peer work is one way of actively engaging students in learning and decentering instruction. It is an opportunity for students to be involved actively in their learning, instead of being spectators.

Diverse learners participating in peer led discussion groups in a regular education fifth grade classroom, is the focus of a study by Goatley, Brock, and Raphael (1995). The researchers observed and documented the interactions among a diverse group of five fifth graders as they read and responded to the final novel in their reading program. Three of the group had traditionally received their reading instruction from Chapter 1, ESL, and Special Education Resource pull-out programs. All participated actively and benefited from the discussion group. The ESL student in particular stated that the book club helped her understand what she was reading.

Mathes and Howard (1998) undertook an empirical study to examine the effectiveness of Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies for First-Grade Readers (First-Grades PALS) as a tool for enhancing the reading achievement of different learners. The study included a great variety of students, including students whose first language was not English. Ninety-six first-grade students in 20 classrooms participated; 10 classrooms incorporated First-Grade PALS into their reading program while 10 continued to teach reading as usual. First Grade Pals is a set of early reading strategies that incorporates research-based best practices in early literacy instruction and uses first graders to mediate the instruction of other first graders. Peers were taught Coach and Reader roles so they could participate in two sets of routines: Sounds and Words, a code-based activity, and Partner Read-Aloud, a literature activity consistent with a holistic framework for reading instruction. Low-achieving students seemed to profit the most from participating in First-Grade PALS according to statistically significant findings and large effect sizes found in several measures. These measures included word attack, word identification, oral reading rate, and early reading skills, such as concepts of print and phonological segmentation. Both teachers and students who participated in First-Grade PALS, reported satisfaction. Teachers stated that PALS was an effective tool for accommodating diversity. Students felt that PALS helped them become better readers and they liked doing First-Grade Pals.

Window into the School Life of an English Language Learner

Juan (not his real name) came into second grade with a winning smile, unable to read although he had been in the same school in the United States since kindergarten. As he came into the room, I let him know that I would be communicating frequently with his parents. I made it clear that both his parents and I had high expectations for him. As the class began opening exercises of the morning, I let him know that all students would participate in various ways. When children were in a turn taking activity, I asked him to slip up his hand when he was ready to give an answer. At first, he thought his smile would be enough participation, but soon he became a much more active participant in the class.

In cooperative activities, Juan became a desired member as his artistic talents became evident. He also learned to dialogue about many topics as he worked on various projects. As a group read a story, he at first learned to follow silently, but soon was even able to read a repeating pattern. When it came time to illustrate a favorite part of the story, he was ready. The weekly second grade level newspaper was of great interest to Juan as the charts, graphs, and other visuals helped him understand the content more easily.

Reading started to be a good part of the day. The phonics based reading series (Appendix) was a highlight for Juan, because he finally began to understand the connection between letters and sounds, how reading went from left to right, and more. His eyes sparkled as he actually began to read independently, and he was able to comprehend what he was reading. Juan also started to get excited about choosing books that he wanted to read, as he became part of Accelerated Reader (Appendix). He would read a book independently, read it with a peer, and then would inform me that he was ready for a comprehension test on the computer. Reaching his Accelerated Reader goal was high on his priority list.

Juan continued to smile as the year progressed, but smiling was no longer an escape from answering a question. He became an active participant in our classroom. It was as though he had come alive. I still remember the day when he bounced into the room running from one word to another that I had up in the class - " Clock, table, door...", he called out, as finally words came alive to him. Juan was learning and enjoying it!

Concluding Comments

Special educators can make a difference in educating the members of a linguistically diverse student body. They can put to use their valuable training and expertise in developing the students' educational plans that will provide meaningful learning experiences, remembering to involve the families. They can encourage the general educators in their school to be certain to provide a balanced educational experience that encompasses systematic phonics based instruction and a print rich environment. In addition, educators would do well to focus strongly on building vocabulary in a variety of ways. The valuable resource of peers, whether they know the dominant language of their fellow student or not, can provide a meaningful, interactive, educational experience for all involved. Whatever the title or label of the adults or children in the classroom, an inclusive, interactive environment needs to be fostered. Then Juan, or someone like him, will be glad to be there, and will thrive as he gets involved in learning.

References

Adams, M. J. (1990). Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Carr, E., Wixson, K. K. (1986) Guidelines for evaluating vocabulary instruction. Journal of Reading, April 588-595.

Dana, C., & Rodriguez, M. (1992). A system to study vocabulary. Reading Research and Instruction, 31 (4), 78-84.

Eeds, M. & Cockrum, W. A. (1985). Teaching word meanings by expanding schemata vs. dictionary work vs. reading in context. Journal of Reading, 28 (6), 492-497.

Fitzgerald, J. (1995a) English-as-a-second-language reading instruction in the United States: A research review. Journal of Reading Behavior, 27, (2), 115-152.

Fitzgerald, J. (1995b) English-as-a-second-language learners' cognitive reading processes: A review of research in the United States. Review of Educational Research, 65, (2) 145-190.

Freeman, D. E., & Freeman, Y. S. (2000) Teaching Reading in Multilingual Classrooms. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Garcia, G. E. (1991). Factors influencing the English reading test performance of Spanish speaking Hispanic children. Reading Research Quarterly,26, (4), 371-392.

Goatley, V. J., & Brock, C. H., & Raphael, T. E. (1995). Diverse learners participating in regular education "Book Clubs". Reading Research Quarterly, 30, (3), 352-380.

Grabe, W. (1991). Current developments in second language reading research. TESOL Quarterly, 25 (3), 375-406.

Gunning, T.G. (1998). Assessing and correcting reading and writing difficulties. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Hopkins, G., & Bean, T. (1998) Vocabulary learning with the verbal-visual word association strategy in a Native American community. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 42 (4), 274-281.

Maria, K. (1990). Reading comprehension instruction: Issues and strategies. Parkton, MD: York Press.

Mathes, P. G., & Howard, J. K. (1998). Peer-assisted learning strategies for first-grade readers: Responding to the needs of diverse learners. Reading Research Quarterly, 33, (1), 66-95.

Nagy, W. E., Herman, P. A., & Anderson, R. C. (1985). Learning words in context. Reading Research Quarterly, 20 (2), 233-253.

Readence, J. E., Bean, T. W., & Baldwin, R. S. (1998). Content area literacy: An integrated approach (6th ed.). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Richard-Amato, P. A. (1992). Peer-teachers: The neglected research. In P.A. Richard-Amato & M. A. Snow (Eds.), The multicultural classroom (pp.271-284). White Plains, New York: Longman.

Sadoski, M., & Paivio, A. (1994). A dual coding view of imagery and verbal processes in reading comprehension. In R. B. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), Theoretical models and processes of reading (4th ed., pp. 414-447). Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Saville-Troike, M. (1984). What really matters in second language learning for academic achievement? TESOL Quarterly, 18 (2), 199-219.

Shand, M. (1993). The role of vocabulary in developmental reading disabilities (Tech. Rep. No. 576). Urbana, IL: Center for the Study of Reading.

Smith, M. K. (1941). Measurement of the size of general English vocabulary through the elementary grades and high school. General Psychological Monographs, 24, 311-345.

Stahl, S. A. (1986). Three principles of effective vocabulary instruction. Journal of Reading, 29, 662-668.

Stahl, S. A. & Fairbanks, M. M. (1986). The effects of vocabulary instruction: A model-based meta-analysis. Review of Educational Research, 56, 72-110.

Stahl, S. A., Dufffy-Hester, A. M., & Stahl, K. A. D. (1998). Everything you wanted to know about phonics (but were afraid to ask). Reading Research Quarterly, 33 (3), 338-355.

Zhang, A., & Schumm, J. S. (2000). Exploring effects of the keyword method on limited English proficient students' vocabulary recall and comprehension. Reading Research and Instruction 39 (3), 202-221.

Appendix

Some Helpful Resources:

1. Help! They Don't Speak English - Starter Kit for Primary Teachers (1998)
A resource guide for educators of limited proficient migrant students, grades Pre-K - 6.
Available from The Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training (ESCORT) for free.

Bugbee Hall - Room 305
Oneonta, New York 13820
1-800-451-8058
ackleyle@oneonta.edu

2. Reading for All Learners - program designed to assist parents, tutors, paraeducators, and teachers in an easy-to-learn format. A series of 150 small decodable readers, ranging in difficulty from kindergarten to mid-third grade is the key to the program.
For ordering information : Cost: inexpensive

Attn: Wendy
Swift Publishing
88 N West State Road
American Fork, UT 84003
1-800-292-2831

3. Accelerated Readers - individualized instruction with learning information software. AR helps motivate, manage and assess literature-based reading.
Available for a reasonable amount from:

Renaissance Learning Incorporated
P.O. Box 8036
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin 54495-8036
1-888-656-2931
www.renlearn.com

Parents
And
Families

Shelia Y. Smalley, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Exceptional Education
University of Central Florida
4000 Central Florida Boulevard
Orlando, Florida 32816-1250
Telephone: (407) 823-6494
E-mail: smalley@mail.ucf.edu
Fax: (407) 823-3859

María E. Reyes-Blanes, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Exceptional Education
University of Central Florida
4000 Central Florida Boulevard
Orlando, Florida 32816-1250
Telephone: (407) 823-5445
E-mail: mblanes@mail.ucf.edu
Fax: (407) 823-3859

LESSONS LEARNED: EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR PARTNERING WITH RURAL AFRICAN-AMERICAN PARENTS

This investigation explored rural African-American parents' perceptions regarding their own and teachers' levels of communication and involvement in the pre-referral stage of the special education process. The study took place at a national conference held in Memphis, Tennessee, where the researchers presented a seminar for parents of children who received special education services.

This study focused on parents from rural Mississippi, who were originally part of a larger data set. Data were collected through a questionnaire, followed by a taped discussion format to determine parents' perceptions of their own and teachers' behaviors in the pre-referral stage. Participants' viewpoints contrast with current perceptions of parental needs during the pre-referral stage and the low levels of participation by African-American parents in their children's education. Lessons learned by rural African-American parents about practical and effective techniques for partnering with teachers within this stage are described.

The enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; P.L. 101-476) was intended to spur the involvement of parents in their children's education, particularly parents of children with special needs. While IDEA validated the role of parents as decision-makers in the educational arena (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1997), this involvement has translated into limited participation geared toward signing written consent for evaluation or placement. Moreover, legislation does not require parental participation in program planning, development of classroom activities, or curriculum improvement. The partnership envisioned by lawmakers, professionals, and parents has not yet become a reality, particularly among African-American parents of children with special needs.

Disproportionate numbers of African-American children continue to be placed in special education programs (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Kauffman, Hallahan, & Ford, 1998). Furthermore, African-American parents' involvement in their children's education is very limited (Harry, Allen, & MClaughlin, 1995). The aforementioned challenges became the researchers' primary motive for conducting this study. The researchers believe that to ascertain why African-American parents are or are not involved in their children's education becomes not only important but critical to improve the level of educational attainment among this population, which will ultimately translate into a better quality of life.

The study took place at a national conference held in Memphis, Tennessee. The purpose of the conference was to address issues related to community development, churches, and education. The objectives of the study were: (a) to identify rural African-American parents' perceptions regarding their own and teachers' levels of communication and involvement in the pre-referral stage of the special education process, (2) to identify rural African-American parents' perceived needs during this stage, and (3) to provide information about lessons learned by rural African-American parents that educators may build upon to support parents during this stage.

Method

Participants

The researchers presented a seminar on "African-Americans' Level of Parental Communication and Involvement with Teachers in the Pre-referral Stage of the Special Education Process". A synopsis of the seminar indicated that the session was open only to parents of children who received special education services.

Of a total of 26 participants in the seminar, 9 were selected for this study on rural African-American parents. Of these parents, 6 (67%) were females and 3 (33%) were males. All 9 parents, including two couples, were from rural Mississippi. Participants' chronological age ranged from the 20's-50's years with a mean of 26.6. In addition, participants defined their marital status as married, single, divorced, or other: 1 (11%) was single, 7 (78%) were married, 1 (11%) was divorced.

Participants reported their income at individual annual income levels: 5 (56%) between \$10,000-\$20,000; 3 (33%) between \$21,000-\$30,000; 1 (11%) between \$31,000-\$40,000. In addition, participants' educational levels (highest level of education obtained) included 7 (78%) with junior high (grades 6-8), 1 (11%) with a bachelor degree, and 1 (11%) with other (i.e., one completed 10th grade).

Participants reported the number of children in their families: 1 (11%) with one child, 1(11%) with three children, 1 (11%) with five children, a couple had six children (22%), and 4 (44%) with seven children, which included a couple. Of a total of 36 children, 17 (47%) received special education services. Parents reported the number of children receiving special education services by categories: 10 (62%) children received services for severe emotional disturbance (SED). One mother reported having 7 children receiving services in specific learning disabilities and speech/language. Of these 7 children, 5 also received services in SED. Thus, the total number of children receiving services in SED was 15 (88%). Children represented in the sample received special education services ranging from a period of 1 to 7 years. Table 1 illustrates the participants' demographic profile.

See Table 1

Procedures

Prior to implementation of this study, a program evaluator and two researchers at the university level, one assistant professor, and one elementary school principal reviewed the proposal of study, including the questionnaire and open-ended questions to ensure their appropriateness for the targeted population. Reviewers provided written feedback regarding readability, clarity, and format appropriateness. The final instrumentation incorporated this information.

The procedures for implementing the study followed four phases. In the first phase, the researchers reviewed the synopsis of the seminar, ensuring that all participants qualified for the study and granted their consent to include quantitative and qualitative data gathered in the study. The second phase of the study focused on the implementation of the questionnaire, which was divided into three sections. The first section collected demographic information. This was followed by a Likert Scale used to identify parents' perceived level of communication and involvement at the pre-referral stage of the special education process. The choices were "5 - always", "4 - most of the time", "3 - sometimes", "2 - seldom", and "1 - never". The third section asked participants to apply the same Likert Scale to rank the perceived level of communication and involvement of their child's teacher during the pre-referral stage. The researchers displayed the entire questionnaire on transparencies and read each item to participants to ensure completion.

During the third phase, the researchers used a group discussion format to document participants' responses on the questionnaire with examples and anecdotes. The researchers assumed this format would enhance the quantitative findings of the study. Participants were encouraged to discuss questions regarding their needs and the lessons learned during the pre-referral stage. A cassette tape recorder was used to capture the discussion along with recording the dialogue on large chart paper before the group, which gave participants an opportunity to observe written comments and to provide additions or deletions. Finally, parents participated in a formal presentation of the intended seminar, which was independently evaluated.

Parent and teacher behaviors, as perceived by parents, during the pre-referral stage of the special education process were quantified. Answers to open-ended questions were transcribed to assist in the analysis of qualitative data, and transcriptions were verified for accuracy.

Quantitative Analysis

Participants' responses were coded by a Likert Scale, whereby the participants indicated their perception of how often they and the teacher engaged in behaviors that best described communication and involvement. The scale ranged from a "5 – always", "4 – most of the time", "3 - sometimes", "2 – seldom", to "1 – never".

Parents' perceptions of their level of involvement and communication depicted high ranks. Seven (78%) parents perceived themselves as being "5" – always to "4" – most of the time involved at the pre-referral stage of the special education process. Parents ranked themselves highly in items such as: As a parent, I

- attended parent-teacher conferences.
- contacted the teacher when I noticed my child's academic and behavior problems.
- asked the teacher to provide learning activities that could assist me in working with my child at home.
- gave the teacher feedback about how my child was progressing with learning activities s/he had provided for me to use with my child.
- sought help from other teachers and professionals in order to correct my child's problem.
- communicated effectively with my child's teacher.

Two participants (22%) presented more scattered results, which included several "3's" –sometimes- and "2's" – seldom.

Conversely, parents' perceptions of teachers' levels of communication and involvement indicated low ranks. Only two (22%) parents perceived that their children's classroom teachers provided them with information about their children's progress on a regular basis and contacted them when their children had academic and behavior problems. On the other hand, five (56%) parents perceived that teachers "3 - sometimes", "2 - seldom", and "1 – never" communicated and involved them in the pre-referral process. Parents gave teachers low rankings in items such as: My child's classroom teacher

- contacted me on a regular basis to celebrate my child's successes.
- shared various ways s/he would try to correct my child's problem.
- gave me an opportunity to be involved in helping her/him plan pre-referral strategies to help my child.
- provided me with learning activities that could assist me in working with my child at home.
- requested feedback from me about how my child was progressing with learning activities s/he had provided for me to use with my child.
- provided me with discipline strategies that could assist me in working with my child at home.
- requested feedback from me about how my child was progressing with discipline strategies s/he provided for me to use with my child.

Two parents presented more scattered results, which included rankings from "5's" –sometimes- to "1's" – never.

Qualitative Analysis

The researchers analyzed and summarized parents' responses to open-ended discussion questions. When asked to describe what their perceived needs were during the pre-referral stage, parents expressed the need to have teachers:

- provide information earlier in the process about the situation and the resources available.
- conduct sensory screenings for children as an initial step.

- involve children in the process by obtaining their input.
- establish clearer lines of communication to discuss both strengths and weaknesses of the child.
- avoid educational jargon and provide clearer explanations.
- explain the long-term impact of diagnosis and placement.
- identify what parents could do to prevent school failure.

When asked about lessons learned by parents during the pre-referral stage, participants identified the following as key behaviors in succeeding during this stage of the special education process:
- make constant visits to the child's classroom (very important)
- communicate with the multidisciplinary team and provide input
- investigate information regarding children from sources other than the classroom teacher
- establish a working relationship with teachers
- ask teachers to send behavior reports everyday, which request parental signatures and return
- request extra homework for children and work with them at home
- enroll children in after-school and tutorial programs
- encourage children's improvement when they are successful and show empathy
- conduct follow-up activities with the teacher
- express concerns and support to the teacher
- be persistent
- share information with young mothers to avoid negative experiences, and
- be aware of teachers and counselors who will sell you their ideas, which you may not want.

During the discussion, the participants asked the researchers to address and/or clarify parents' rights related to the following issues: the special education process (particularly least restrictive environment, accepting and rejecting exceptional education placements and services, due process, sharing information and recommendations with teachers when parents are unable to identify strategies by "school names", tape recorded meetings, writing during meetings, and asking for clarification during meetings), classroom visitation policies, cum folder review policies, remediation for children who do not qualify for exceptional education services, and pastors or his/her designee accompanying parents to meetings related to the special education process. The researchers addressed each of these issues during this phase.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study suggested that rural African-American parents participating in the study perceived themselves to have a high level of communication and involvement in the pre-referral stage of the special education process. Conversely, they perceived teachers as having a low level of communication and involvement during this phase. Participants' viewpoints contrast with current perceptions on the low levels of participation of African-American parents in their children's education. This disparity suggests the need for further investigation of teachers' and parents' perceptions and expectations regarding their level of communication and involvement during this critical stage.

Parents' descriptions of their perceived needs and lessons learned during the pre-referral stage are practical and effective techniques for partnering with teachers. While the researchers' initial presentation did not include issues like parents' rights, school and classroom policies, and remediation for children who do not qualify for special education services, parents indicated a need for the researchers to address and/or clarify these issues. The parents' request for such clarity suggests they were not clear on these issues even after their children were placed in special education programs, and further exploration of parents' understanding regarding these issues must be conducted during the pre-referral stage.

The information generated in this study, by rural African-American parents, clearly indicates how educators may bridge the gap and build support for parents during the pre-referral stage of the special education process. Based on parents' recommendations, the researchers offer educators the following suggestions to assist parents during this stage. Educators must

- work to develop rapport and trust in the parent-teacher relationship.
- communicate clearly and positively with parents, without educational jargon.
- encourage parental communication and involvement with the multidisciplinary team, and explain how parents may participate.
- identify and share concerns about students' academic and behavior problems with parents and students immediately.
- ensure sensory screenings are conducted for students prior to the referral stage.
- identify strategies parents can use to assist their children and provide a plan for follow-up.
- explore parents' understanding of their rights, resources available, school and classroom policies, and the long term impact of diagnosis and placement in special education programs.

In reviewing the research findings, caution must be exercised due to the confined nature of this study. This study only examined 9 parents living in rural Mississippi. These participants were identified via a national conference on issues related to community development, church, and education. In addition, it is critical to consider the restricted research findings and literature accessible on this subject. While there is a profusion of information on parent involvement in education, there is a dearth of information on African-American parents' level of communication and involvement with teachers in the pre-referral stage of the special education process.

Without question, the researchers believe a strong partnership must exist between parents and school personnel during the pre-referral stage of the special education process. The need to actively involve African-American parents in their children's education continues to be one of educator's greatest challenges. Educators can not afford to have rural African-American parents view the pre-referral process as a paper signing activity for evaluation and placement of their children in special education programs. We must work together to bring the spirit of IDEA to fruition, which is to involve parents of children with special needs in their children's education.

References

Artiles, A.J. and Ternt, S.C. (1994). Overrepresentation of minority students in special education: A continuing debate. The Journal of Special Education, 27, 410-437.

Harry, B., Allen, N., & Mclaughlin, M. (1995). Communication versus compliance: African-American Parent's involvement in special education. Exceptional Children, 61(4), 364-377.

Kauffman, J.M., Hallahan, and Ford, D.Y. (1998, Spring). Disproportional representation of minority students in special education. [Special Section]. The Journal of Special Education, 32.

Turnbull, A.P., & Turnbull, H.R. (1997). Families, professionals, and exceptionality: A special partnership. Upper Saddle river, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Table 1
Participants' Demographic Profile

Variables		Percentages	N
			9
Age			
Range 20's to 50's years			
Mean 26.6 years			
Gender			
Females		6 (67%)	
Males		3 (33%)	
Level of Education			
Junior High		7 (78%)	
Some high school (10th)		1 (11%)	
Bachelor Degree		1 (11%)	
Marital Status			
Single		1 (11%)	
Married		7 (78%)	
Divorced		1 (11%)	
Annual Income			
$10,000 - $20,000		5 (56%)	
$21,000 - $30,000		3 (33%)	
$31,000 - $40,000		1 (11%)	
Number of Children in the Family			
1		1 (11%)	
3		1 (11%)	
5		1 (11%)	
6	couple only	2 (22%)	
7	couple included	4 (44%)	
Special Education Services*			
Specific Learning Disabilities		7 (69%)	
Severe Emotional Disturbance		15 (88%)	
Speech and Language		7 (69%)	

* Students were receiving services in more than one category.

Kevin J. Miller, Ed.D.
Department of Human Services & Wellness
College of Education
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL 32816

Wilfred D. Wienke, Ed.D.
Department of Human Services & Wellness
College of Education
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL 32816

PARENT PARTNERSHIPS: TIPS FOR TEACHERS

The need to increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children, especially children with disabilities in rural areas, is common knowledge to educators. Additionally, the trend toward more inclusive schooling placements continues to highlight the importance for effective parent-teacher communication and collaboration. To reach this end, educators and parents are continuously seeking strategies and suggestions to involve parents and the community in planning for the acceptance and implementation of inclusion.

Parents have vocalized that in their experiences there is a need to train teachers in ways to communicate with parents, using language and terms that parents better understand. The parents also see a need to provide teachers with strategies for increasing opportunities for parent participation in the decision making process at schools. Such efforts to promote and advance parent-teacher partnerships might best be initiated by teachers. Experience has demonstrated that time and time again, as teachers' fears diminish with regards to collaboration and interaction with families, so do the fears of parents. Thus, training programs for educators, such as teacher preparation programs and inservice professional development activities, should make systematic efforts to target strategies on creating and improving parent communication as well as opportunities for parental involvement. Such training should address both potential barriers to effective communication, as well as effective strategies to overcome the barriers.

In order to facilitate parent-teacher partnerships, teachers must be aware of barriers that may inhibit healthy parent-teacher communication. Some barriers are:

- impersonal initial communication
- initial interaction that focuses on criticism
- use of loaded words that may be misinterpreted
- failure to include specific information and over use of general terms that may be misunderstood
- being overly formal, this may lead a parent to believe that a teacher is talking down to them, thus not seen as a partner
- failure to recognize when a parent is inadvertently put on the defensive

As we all know, it is not enough to merely know the barriers and what not to do. Teachers, as well as other educators, should seek to learn, use, and promote supportive communication strategies that can be used to establish positive rapport and a spirit of collaboration with parents. Some suggested strategies to promote effective parent-teacher partnerships include:

- make parents feel welcome by acknowledging that their opinions are requested and respected
- initial contact should be as personal as possible
- as much as possible, reduce or eliminate the element of surprise by scheduling meetings, this avoids one of the parties feeling as though they are being attacked and thus must respond in a defensive manner
- provide a safe environment that allows for privacy, this will encourage more open and frank discussion

- use less formal approaches, using a first name will allow parents to feel more welcome and help them view the teacher as an ally
- information should be readily available for parents, especially when they first learn of their child having signs of a disability
- establish and maintain regular contact
- use descriptive everyday language and avoid jargon as much as possible
- visit the home setting to discover the student's normal environment
- view parents as a valuable resource who have information on the trials and errors the student faced prior to current placement
- be willing to share lesson plans, literature, and techniques/strategies
- show empathy with parents for what it might be like to have a child with special needs
- be prepared to repeat information to help with parent comprehension
- adjust level of information presented to parent based on their needs – some may need general information while others are seeking more specifics (i.e., causes, placement)

The use of effective communication skills to form collaborative relationships with parents and families promotes the best interests of the child. Hence, it is crucial that teachers and other educators develop strategies to establish and maintain open lines of communication with school-to-home-to-school contact. Such communication will ultimately promote the exchange of information and strategies between teachers and parents. Simply stated, parents are too important to overlook as meaningful partners. Educators and parents must continue to forge parent-teacher partnerships in order to develop programs to best meet the needs of students.

References

Miller, K. (Producer). (1999). Skills for inclusive schools: Parent partnerships (Instructional Video – 20 min.). Discovery Video: Morgantown, WV

Preservice/ Inservice

June Canty Lemke, Ed. D.
Department of Teacher Education
Gonzaga University
Spokane, Washington

Suzanne Harrison, Ph.D.
Evergreen Elementary School
Redmond School District
Redmond, Oregon

"BUT I HAVE A RIGHT TO BECOME A TEACHER!"

Introduction

Teacher educators have become increasingly aware of the growing shortage of beginning teachers who will be needed to replace the large number of current teachers who are reaching retirement age. This shortage is having an impact on teacher education programs and teacher educators are being asked to dramatically increase the number of teachers they can prepare each year. Teacher educators are also being asked, however, to maintain and/or increase the quality of the teachers they prepare and those candidates are being required to meet ever-increasing standards in order to be eligible for licensure. These dual forces, which are in some ways in conflict, are confronting teacher educators at a time when they are being faced more and more often with lawsuits from students they have dismissed from the programs or have not admitted in the first place.

In this paper, we will 1) discuss the growing teacher shortage, especially the trends that affect rural and small school districts and the impact this call for an increase in the number of beginning teachers is having on teacher educators, particularly as it relates to the issue of maintaining quality of their programs and the teachers they prepare; 2) share the processes one institution used to develop indicators of quality, both academic and attitudinal, of their preservice students; and 3) share the fair processes that institution developed in order to protect itself legally from the lawsuits filed by students who sued after being dismissed from the program because they not demonstrate the needed competencies.

The growing teacher shortage

There is a growing awareness of the predicted teacher shortage and the teacher education literature, as well as the popular press, have published an increasing number of studies which alert us to this shortage and the need to increase the supply of qualified beginning teachers (Arakawa, 1999; Associated Press, 1999; Dortch, 1994; Koretz, 1997). In Hawaii, for example, the Department of Education expects they will need about 400 new special education teachers in each of the next three years. "There are 21,000 special-needs students among the state's 187,395 students" (Arakawa, 1999). Over 50% of the current special education teaching positions are held by teachers who are not licensed in special education (working under emergency credential) and a new state law says they cannot be rehired. In addition to this, the state experiences an approximately 50% attrition rate in each two-year period (Arakawa, 1999). Another complicating factor is the decision in a recent federal class action suit (brought by Jennifer Felix) which called for the state to provide increased mental health services for disabled students by June 2000.

In Nevada, the Clark County School District (CCSD), a district that covers 7910 square miles and educates students in urban (metropolitan Las Vegas area), suburban and rural locations, they find the population has doubled in the last ten years and in 1998, the county had a population of approximately 1.25 million. It is now the eighth largest district in the United States. Official enrollment for the 1998-1999 school year was 203,777, constituting 60 per cent of all school children in Nevada. Significant changes in the county population have impacted public education in the district. The CCSD states that socio-economic indicators show that Clark County is above the state average in the number of minority residents (21.2%) and above the state average in the number of families living below the poverty level (11.1%). The CCSD employs over 13,000 licensed staff with more than 1500 teachers being hired each of the last 8 years.

Indicators of quality

The decision to admit a student to a teacher preparation program is an important one: important to that individual's future and crucial to the children the individual would encounter in his/her career in teaching. Equally important are the decisions we make as professionals to dismiss a student from our program. As we move into an ever more litigious society, teacher educators must be aware of our rights and responsibilities regarding admissions and dismissal decisions. More and more of us are being faced with the threat of lawsuits from students to whom we have denied admission or have dismissed from our programs. We know that being successful in teaching involves more than achieving an adequate grade point average, that there are professional and interpersonal skills necessary for success in teaching, but we often have difficulty articulating just what those skills are. As we think about defending ourselves in court, we must be able to show clearly that we can identify what those skills are, that we can assess them adequately, and can judge when a student is deficient and shows too little aptitude for success in teaching.

The importance of these issues was underscored in 1997 when the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education's Executive Committee approved the formation of a new Special Study Group (SSG) devoted to Admission and Retention in Teacher Education. The SSG met for the first time at the 1998 Annual Meeting and described its work as the examination of issues related to admissions and retention of students in teacher preparation programs. Members will share existing admissions policies and procedures, discuss legal issues related to those policies, and discuss specific problems related to admission and retention.

As our institution faced four lawsuits several years ago, we found the need to go beyond the teacher education literature to learn how to better protect the institution from suits filed to protest our admissions and dismissal decisions, decisions we know are valid, judgments that need to be made. We studied the court rulings from other professional programs and then initiated the processes described below at our institution.

At Gonzaga University, we began with a model first developed at the University of Redlands and then revamped it to meet our particular needs. We wanted to find a way to screen out program applicants who showed little potential for success in our program and to get to know the skills and needs of our prospective students. We also wanted to introduce the key themes of our program so students would know from the beginning what our program emphasized and what we valued as professionals. In particular, we wanted to introduce the concept of reflective thinking, the idea that teaching is an interpersonal and professional act, the idea of the value of developing conflict resolution skills, and the philosophy we share in our belief in the value of multiple perspectives and ways of doing. We also wanted to introduce students to the importance of the development of their professional skills, including humor, self-knowledge, resiliency factors, collaboration, respect for the field of education, how to think on your feet, and how to collaborate. We based our model on the literature on reflective thinking (Posner's work was our true base), on the literature about adult learners, on the teacher induction literature, and on surveys done by the Washington State Professional Education Advisory Board about the skills needed by beginning teachers.

We decided to structure a Professional Skills Lab as a Saturday morning, four-hour session with a variety of activities. We would begin with a welcome and an introduction from the Associate Dean, introducing the faculty, and explaining the rationale for the Lab. We would then discuss advising, state regulations, and distribute some of the paperwork we're required to file. We wanted to teach a new skill in the Lab to make this a more meaningful learning experience and decided to investigate various instruments we might use during the Lab. We selected the True Colors materials (True Colors Communications Group, 1990) which are based on Jungian theory and are somewhat related to the Meyers-Briggs test. The True Colors materials help individuals (children and/or adults) identify four basic personality types; the materials include suggested classroom activities and videos.

We begin the morning with a review of the history and purpose of the Lab and then present the True Colors theory. We spend approximately 1.5 hours presenting the theory, having students self-analyze, having students work in small groups, and then doing a jigsaw activity back to the full group. Then we show a video we made in which we demonstrate the theory in practice in a simulation of our introductory course. We then divide students into small groups and assign each group a faculty member/facilitator; the groups discuss the theory and how they might apply the information while the facilitator records behavioral observations. We did change this process after the first time through because we found that the facilitators were so skillful that all students participated actively in the groups and we observed no problematic behaviors. We now run the groups in a leaderless format; the students are given three situations they might encounter as teachers and are asked to come to consensus about what they would do if they were in that situation. The faculty member is a silent observer and record-keeper. Students then are called back to the large group and are given a reflective writing exercise.

The products we take away from the Lab are the state-required forms, the faculty observers' notes from the leaderless group discussion, and the reflective writing sample. The Department Chair then reviews all the materials, meets with students who were identified as potentially problematic, and files the materials in their departmental files.

The advantages we have found from this process are that faculty who teach courses later in the program have a chance to meet the new students, students have a chance to meet the faculty, and students learn a new theory and develop better interpersonal skills. We can identify and counsel out of the program the students who show insufficient potential for teaching at this point. We have a chance to screen the students before they request a site for their first In-School Experience and the students have a chance to bond together with other students who share a common goal. Students have told us in both their reflective writing exercises and comments made orally that the Lab was a really positive experience. They learn about themselves, how to better deal with others and about the professional skills they will need to develop. The disadvantages are that it means faculty are asked to work on yet another Saturday morning, it's hard to predict how many students will actually attend, we have to follow up on the students who did not attend, and it generates zero credit hours but incurs expenses in faculty time and physical resources.

To date, approximately 600 Gonzaga students have completed the process. Since we initiated this process, not one student has been dropped from the program after being admitted. We are convinced that in the cases of students we have not admitted that our collective judgments were justified. We believe that our teacher preparation program has been strengthened by more careful attention to the admissions process because we are able to use the insights gained during the assessment as diagnostic information to better meet individual student's needs. This process has enabled us to be much more clear with prospective students about the ideas and values embedded in our program, including our commitment to cross-cultural teaching, our belief in the necessity of effective interpersonal skills, and our commitment to diversity. We have also been able to recruit more students from under-represented groups because of our move to this more holistic admissions process.

While we were designing the Professional Skills Lab, we developed a Fair Process Manual to apprise students of their rights and responsibilities and to make them aware of the monitoring processes we would be using to assess their progress in the teacher education program. This document was drafted by the various directors of programs within the School of Education and then was rewritten to correct for style. The document was then sent to our Academic Vice President and to the university's corporate counsel for extensive reviews. We made needed changes and then published the document; it has been revised since our administrative restructuring to reflect current job titles and processes. The Fair Process Manual is distributed to all incoming students each semester. We also developed a receipt form which students sign to acknowledge that they received the Manual and promise to read it; students receive a copy of that form and the original is filed in their certification file.

The Fair Process Manual refers to the importance of the development of interpersonal, social, and behavioral competencies deemed essential for the profession. We needed to be specific about what those competencies were so that we could communicate them clearly to our incoming students. We gathered the faculty together and brainstormed the essential behaviors we needed to observe in our students and designed a list we call "Professional Standards for Teacher Education Students." This list is divided into five categories: responsibility, integrity, attitude, respect, and service and describes the expectations (everything from appropriate attire to being punctual to volunteering time to the community) we have; the list also reiterates our division's mission statement. We distribute it at our Professional Skills Lab and discuss it each semester in our classes when we review the syllabus for our course.

We also use a system we call "Yellow Lights" in which our faculty record anecdotally any incidents which cause them concern. These are sent to the program director so she can track our students' progress and meet with them to discuss the concerns. We also work with our Student Disabilities Services center regarding students who have self-disclosed their disabilities; faculty are notified each semester of any students needing accommodations in order to be successful. This process is handled in a confidential manner in order to protect students' rights.

Legal processes

We are beginning to see a number of teacher educators (Lemke, 2000; Lemke and Harrison, 2000) who are writing about the legal implications of their admissions and dismissal decisions and a growing discussion of the ways colleges can protect themselves legally from the inevitable lawsuit from someone who was dismissed but insists that everyone has a right to become a teacher.

Many teacher educators have been faced with the threat of lawsuits from students who were either not admitted or who were dismissed at some point in the teacher preparation program. Many of us have been sued and have had the experience of being told by the judge that our procedures were insufficient in terms of explaining our policies, the definition of professional judgment and how the role plays in a decision to dismiss a student. This insufficiency resulted in the upholding of the student's case and the university was forced to readmit the student or even pay damages to the student. However, we find that in many cases, the same situation is not true in other professions. There have been suits filed against schools of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and nursing, which dismissed students (often for lack of development of appropriate "professional skills", and the courts upheld the decision to dismiss. Teacher educators can learn from these experiences by studying the relevant court and identifying ways these other professionals have found to protect themselves and justify the professional judgments they have exercised.

Decisions to deny admission or to dismiss a student from a professional program are never easy. The issue of faculty members' reluctance to make these kinds of decisions exists in every professional program. There may be particular concern on the part of our tenure-track and clinical faculty (e.g. student teaching supervisors) because of their perception about the extent to which the institution will back them. However, the courts have treated decisions made by faculty in all categories equally and have supported academicians' decisions as long as students' rights were observed and the decisions were made fairly. In *Connelly v. University of Vermont* (1965), the federal district court ruled that it is within the purview of academic freedom for faculty to make decisions about students' progress. Faculty and administrators were described as being uniquely qualified to make these judgments.

When faculty use quantifiable assessment strategies it is fairly easy to show how a student is progressing. It is less clear, and so less comfortable for many faculty, to discuss a student's performance when more subjective assessment methods are used. In teacher education, as in other professional programs which include clinical experiences, it is necessary and appropriate for faculty to make subjective judgments about a student's progress. Fassett and Olswang (1991) found that "recent court decisions have upheld faculty professional judgments when minimal due process was provided" (p. 211). They went on to point out that "when students' rights are observed, and a fair evaluation of the student's progress indicates a basis for dismissal, faculty members at all levels can be reasonably confident that they will prevail in a legal challenge" (p. 214).

Conclusion

The development of our Professional Skills Lab, Fair Process Manual, and Yellow Lights system, and the more consistent implementation of our policies and procedures has led to four years with no lawsuits filed against us. We need to prepare the most effective teachers we can in order to meet the needs of today's students. We must protect our institutions and we ought to feel confident about the defensibility of our professional judgments so that we can continue to prepare future teachers of the highest quality. We can do this if we study the experiences of our colleagues in other professional programs and learn to develop and then apply consistently our policies and procedures.

References

Arakawa, L. (1999, January 30). Shortage of teachers feared in Hawaii. The Honolulu Advertiser, A1-A2.

Dortch, S. (1994). A slow fade for the echo boom. American Demographics, 16, (7), 15.

Educational Accountability/Government Relations Office, Clark County School District. (1999). Meeting the needs of Every Child: Clark County School District 1998 annual report. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Fassett, W. E. and Olswang, S.G. (1991). Affiliate faculty and student evaluation, discipline, and dismissals. American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 55, 211-218.

Koretz, G. (1997). A teacher crunch ahead? High school rolls are rising sharply. Business Week, Nov. 17, (3553), 34.

Lemke, J.C. (2000). Shaping the Future: Legal Implications of Admission/Dismissal Decisions." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Chicago, IL: February 2000.

Lemke, J.C. and Harrison, S. (2000). Changing paradigms: a new teacher education model for rural Hawaii. Rural Special Education Quarterly, in press.

Public Information Office, Clark County School District. (1999, January). Facts and figures. Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Associated Press (1999). Masters program lets professionals go back into the school. Tri-City Herald, May 3, 1999, A4.

Melanie Jephson, Ph.D.
Rebecca Dillon, M.Ed.
Stephen F. Austin State University
P. O. Box 13019 SFA Station
Nacogdoches, Texas 75962

A CAPSTONE PRACTICUM COURSE THROUGH DISTANCE LEARNING

There is a significant need for fully qualified personnel to serve children with high incidence disabilities in rural areas (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). Rural school districts across the nation find that recruiting and retaining qualified special education teachers is a major problem. Small and rural school districts experience serious problems in teacher turnover with 26% of new teachers leaving after the first two years and 60% after the first five years (Henry, 1986). Salvesborgh (1995) and Helge (1981) reported isolation as the most common cause of teacher turnover in rural areas. According to Knapczyk, Rodes, Chung, and Chapman (1999), the lack of nearby training opportunities has contributed to teacher shortages and high percentages of teachers on emergency permits in rural communities. Delivery of teacher education courses is especially problematic in rural areas because many students live a far distance from a University.

As we face the challenge of recruiting and retaining special educators to teach in rural areas, University educator preparation programs have embraced the concept of distance learning. In recent years, distance education has often focused on high-end technologies with big price tags. In a time of tight budgets and limited resources, we must face the practical issue of developing workable models for distance education. This paper describes a capstone course delivered to students in the Rural Special Education Training Project as a distance education course.

Description of the Program

The Rural Special Education Training Project is a three-year project that began September 1, 1999 and is supported by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (Grant #H325H990023). The primary goal of the Rural Special Education Training Project is to address the chronic shortage of fully qualified special education teachers in rural East Texas by preparing undergraduate and post-baccalaureate level students to earn the Texas Generic Special Education teaching certificate (24 hours), or the Generic Special Education endorsement (18 hours). Also targeted are currently employed teachers who lack special education certification and are teaching on an "emergency permit," paraprofessionals with at least two years of college who are currently employed in rural districts, teacher trainees with disabilities, and those who are culturally diverse. Special curricular emphasis is placed on training special educators to apply best practices such as direct instruction, applied behavior analysis, collaborative teaching, instructional modifications, and learning strategies. In addition, course content is sensitive to a rural perspective, focusing on the unique challenges of educating special education students living in rural areas. Distance education strategies such as web-based classes, Friday-Saturday classes, and interactive video classes are utilized to meet the needs of students in the program. Scholarships are provided to students on a competitive basis. Scholarship recipients must commit to teaching special education in a rural school for a minimum of two years for each year in which a scholarship was received.

Sequence of Courses

The curriculum for the Generic Special Education certificate includes eight courses (24 credit hours). Students must take SPE 329 Survey of Exceptionalities as a prerequisite for all other courses, then they move through the sequence of courses as follows:

SPE 439	Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis
SPE 432	Educational Appraisal of Exceptional Children
SPE 434	Functional Living Skills for Persons with Disabilities
SPE 438	Academic Instruction for Persons with Disabilities
SPE 463	Consulting with Parents and Professionals
SPE 466	Assistive Technology
SPE 461	Practicum in Special Education

The Practicum in Special Education is typically taken in the last semester of the sequence, prior to the student teaching experience (those already employed on emergency permits do not student teach). This course is designed to provide field experience in special education settings and is a "capstone" course designed to enable students to attain critical and higher order thinking skills, synthesizing theory and practice. The term "capstone" is defined as "the high point: crowning achievement" (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1983). The concept of a "capstone" course was implemented at our University in order to prepare students to pass the competency examinations for teachers in our state.

Competency Testing in Texas

The Examination for the Certification of Educators in Texas (ExCET) is a criterion-referenced test required by the State of Texas since 1986, and is designed to assess professional knowledge and subject matter knowledge required of beginning teachers. At least two ExCET tests are required for anyone applying for an initial teacher's certificate. In order to be recommended for certification, candidates must pass both the Professional Development ExCET (Elementary or Secondary) and a teaching field ExCET (in this case, Generic Special Education). There are specific competencies that must be mastered for each test. The Practicum in Special Education course is the one designed to help students apply knowledge learned in previous coursework in a real-world school setting, synthesizing theory and practice.

Description of Students in the Program

The initial group of 15 scholarship recipients, Cohort 1, participated in the distance education section of SPE 461-Practicum in Special Education. This group was comprised of 12 female and 3 male students, with 11 Caucasian, 2 African-American and 2 Hispanic students. The majority (9) were undergraduate level students; however, 2 students were post-baccalaureate level and 4 students were working towards or had already completed a Master's degree. These students commuted to the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University from rural areas of East Texas. Most were students over traditional age that were employed as paraprofessionals or teachers in special education classrooms. Several students in the group were seeking a career change after working many years in other fields such as advertising, nursing and the ministry.

Description of the Practicum Course

Since many of our scholarship recipients commute to campus from rural areas, a special section was developed. This class met 5 times over the course of the semester on Friday evenings and Saturday. Sessions were conducted in a seminar format with an agenda for each meeting. Students participated in reviews of the Generic Special Education ExCET Competencies and test-taking strategies. Students were assigned practicum field placements during which they maintained a log of observation times, completed weekly reflective journals that included a "focus of the week" based on an ExCET competency, and developed a case study of an individual student. Materials and curricula regarding working with culturally and linguistically diverse children with high-incidence disabilities in rural, high-poverty areas were developed and infused into the course. In addition, students received training in working with children from generational poverty in a workshop format.

During the field experience component of the Practicum, students were placed in rural schools in their home communities and the Project Coordinator made visits to field placement sites. Collaboration with administration, faculty and staff of rural field experience site schools was essential to the success of the practicum course. In order to facilitate field placements, an initial phone contact was made to schedule an appointment with the principal or special education director at the site school. Site visits were then made to the school and the practicum instructor met with the administrator and cooperating teacher to review materials explaining the practicum and answer questions or address concerns. Folders containing course syllabus, calendar and overview were given to school personnel. Practicum placements were monitored with follow-up phone calls and email. A second site visit was made to many of the schools at the end of the semester. The practicum instructor sent letters of appreciation to administrators and cooperating teachers for working with our students in their field placements. Rural school districts played a vital role in providing field experience sites for future special educators and we worked diligently at establishing and maintaining positive partnerships with our site schools.

The students were asked to complete a mid-term evaluation and a final evaluation in order to assess strengths and weaknesses of the distance education practicum course from the students' perspectives. The majority of students in the class felt that meeting once a month best suited their schedules and needs. Many students commented that the seminar format of the class and the independent work required were positive experiences. They felt that they benefited from ExCET reviews and test-taking strategies provided in the class and they found the Practicum Handbook helpful. Students also seemed to enjoy the classroom environment, the organization of the class, and the community of learners that was formed during the semester. One weakness that was noted was a loss of continuity due to the length of time between each class meeting. Several students suggested meeting twice monthly and having frequent e-mail assignments to help the students stay connected. The majority of students stated that the course should continue to be offered as a distance education section on the weekends. They also felt that the ExCET preparation, the field experience and the group activities should remain in the course. Students wished that we had spent more time in class discussing teaching strategies, forms used in special education, and other practical issues. They seemed to want to know more of the "inside stuff" about being a teacher that is not covered in textbooks. One suggestion was to add a seminar on assertiveness and working with other professionals. Overall, the students appreciated the atmosphere, organization and content of the class and believed that they were better prepared for the ExCET examination and for student teaching.

Effectiveness of the Practicum Course

On November 18, 2001, students enrolled in the Practicum course took the Generic Special Education ExCET Exam. All students received a passing score of 70 or higher on the exam. Ten percent of students achieved a score of 95, 62% scored between 80 and 89, and 28% scored between 70 and 79 on the exam. These results were achieved through the students' hard work and commitment to success on the Exam. On evaluation forms, the students attributed their success to the reviews of ExCET competencies, instruction on test-taking strategies, and motivational techniques included in the distance education practicum course. Many of them felt that they had more confidence in their knowledge base and test-taking abilities after completing the course.

Conclusion

While many universities are employing costly distance education delivery systems, we have concluded that a weekend face-to-face class is a workable model for distance education for students in our rural area. Students developed a camaraderie with each other and began to form a network of colleagues whom they will rely upon later when they encounter problems in their classrooms, or when they want to share ideas. We also discovered that focused classroom observations related to specific competencies and reflective journaling were effective in helping students apply critical thinking skills and synthesize theory and practice. While student success on the state competency exam cannot be entirely related to this one course, we believe the course did contribute to the group's 100% pass rate.

References

Helge, D. (1981). Problems in implementing comprehensive special education programming in rural areas. Exceptional Children, 47, 514-520.

Henry, M. (1986). Strengths and needs of first-year teachers. Teacher Educator, 2, 10-18.

Knapczyk, D., Rodes, P., Chung, H., & Chapman, C. (1999). Collaborative teacher education in off-campus rural communities. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 18(3/4), 36-43.

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (9th ed.). (1983). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Salvesborgh, M. (1995). Meeting changing rural needs: Recruitment and preparation of culturally diverse specialist cadres in an award winning rural internship program. In: Reading to the future: Boldly facing challenges in rural communities. Conference proceedings of the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES).

U. S. Department of Education (1998). To assure the free appropriate public education of all children with disabilities: Nineteenth annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Washington, DC: Author.

Patricia Thomas Cegelka, Ed.D
Professor, San Diego State University
San Diego, CA

Suzanne Fitch, Ed.D.
Director, The Institute for Effective Education
San Diego, CA

Jose Luis Alvarado, Ph.D
Assistant Professor, San Diego State University
San Diego, Ca

THE COACH-OF-COACHES MODEL FOR PREPARING RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Chronic shortages of fully qualified special education teachers thwart efforts to deliver appropriate educational programs to students with disabilities. These shortages have been described as substantial, durable and national in scope (Boe, Cook, Kaufman, & Danielson, 1996) and are due to insufficient production of new special education teachers as well as the relatively high turnover rate of special education teachers. As a result, special education, more than any other area of education, has high numbers of teachers who lack full qualification and are transitional in nature. These problems are particularly acute in regions that are rural and/or sparsely populated – descriptors that describe approximately two-thirds of the nation's school districts (Hicks, 1994). While "ruralness" is primarily defined in terms of low population density, rural districts also may be isolated due to geographic barriers (e.g., mountains, desert terrain) and may be characterized by populations that are predominantly poor, minority, immigrant, and/or migrant.

The challenges involved in obtaining qualified special education teachers in rural regions are immense. It has not proved productive to address rural shortages through urban-based preparation programs that have the goal, hope and/or expectation that the new teachers will either accept or remain in jobs in sparsely populated regions. Most teacher candidates in special education prefer to teach in suburban communities (Bell, Bull, Barrett, Montgomery, & Hyle, 1993). Further, urban-based programs seldom prepare candidates for local community values. Nor do they include specific concepts and competencies about service delivery in rural regions (Carr, 1995; Cole & Leeper, 1995). Further, urban-prepared new teachers often have difficulty adjusting to the social relationships and cultural values of rural regions (Muse & Thomas, 1992). A much more productive approach to responding to rural teacher shortages has proved to be the preparation of individuals who reside in the community (Alvarado & Cegelka, in press; Bornfield, Hall, Hall, & Hoover, 1997). "Commitment to place" has been identified as the singularly most important factor in the retention of rural special educators (Bell, et al, 1993; Gamble, 1995; Muse & Thomas, 1992; Wei, Shapero, & Boggess, 1993).

In recognition of the benefits of preparing local people as special education teachers, urban universities have responded by placing credential programs in rural regions, frequently relying on adjunct faculty of unknown or indifferent quality and providing limited control of program quality or fidelity (Helge & Mars, 1982). Over the past decade, increasing numbers of technologically-based distance-education models have been developed; these incorporate various combinations of satellite course delivery, compressed video-disc delivery, and on-site delivery of instruction (Howard, Ault, Knowlton, & Swall, 1992; Collins, 1997; Ludlow, 1994). Often these programs are designed primarily for uncertified in-service teachers and employ some form of alternative certification, often in partnership with the district(s) in which the teachers are employed.

Regardless of the delivery structure of these programs, a major drawback has been the difficulties inherent in providing adequate arena-of-reality practica in actual rural classrooms. The geographic distance between the university and the rural community can make the time requirements and transportation costs for campus-based supervisors prohibitive, leading to supervision that is infrequent and of questionable quality. This is problematic given that the field-based or practica portions of teacher preparation programs are widely viewed as the critical bridge between theory and practice (Welch & Kukic, 1988). To assure that this bridging occurs requires that there be systematic supervision and support that involves frequent observation, feedback, and guided practice (Englemann, 1988). This level of support that can be particularly difficult to attain when teacher preparation is occurring within the context of distance education. Various forms of peer-coaching have evolved as one means of providing high quality support and assistance to in-service teachers whether or not they hold credentials.

Overview of Paper

Our program utilized a form of peer coaching to develop a coach-of-coaches model of providing support, assistance, and supervision to Intern teachers in their own classrooms within the context of a rural special education alternative credential program. The rural special education credential program has been offered for over 10 years by San Diego State University through a combination of U.S. Office of Special Education programs grant money, district and county funding, university instructional budgets, and more recently, state Internship Credential monies. Initially conceptualized primarily as a program for emergency-permit teachers, over the past seven years it has evolved into an Internship Credential model as described in detail in the *Rural Special Education Quarterly* (Cegelka & Alvarado, in press). The alternative Internship Credential permits personnel without California certification to serve as classroom teachers for a maximum of two years during which time they must complete all credential requirements. These two years as fully-paid provisionally certified teachers count toward salary increments and tenure credit. During each semester of their Internship Credential program, they receive support, assistance and supervision from both the university and the districts while enrolled in an approved preparation program at a university. The rural special education Internship Credential program described here has resulted in full certification of over 60% of the region's current special education teachers, with teacher attrition being quite low (less than 15% total over six years). A key feature of this program has been its coach-of-coaches model which was developed to address both the geographic and fiscal barriers to providing support and supervision to teachers-in-training across this 4,300 square mile region. With a ratio of two to three Interns for each unit of faculty workload, plus the disincentive of traveling great distances to provide in-class support, it was essential that an alternative approach to support and supervision be developed if the program was to be affordable and effective. The coach-of-coaches model we developed reduces the practica costs to approximately one-fifth the cost of traditional approaches and it does so with no apparent loss of program quality. The district coaches, the regional support staff, and the university Intern Support Liaison ((ISL) function together in a single system of beginning special education teacher support and assistance based on continuous assessment of Intern needs over the entire four semesters of program participation. This paper describes the key elements of the coach-of-coaches model and delineates the observation system that serves as a common vehicle for analysis of teaching by the Interns, their coaches, and the university Practica Support Liaison.

Coach-of-Coaches Model

Too often teachers are left to their own devices when it comes to translating theories and skills that they learn in university courses into actual classroom practice; they develop their teaching approaches and deal with classroom problems in isolation (Englert & Tarrant, 1997). This is particularly a problem for novice teachers who are may be more focused on day-to-day survival rather than improving their instructional delivery. The quality of mentoring provided new teachers, including teachers working toward full certification, is critical to their professional development as well as their retention as teachers. New teachers for whom clear expectations and goals are set and who receive specific, constructive feedback on their actual teaching practices tend to experience early success as teachers, a self-efficacy factor that is itself predictive of long-term teacher retention (Chapman & Green, 1986; DeYoung, 1991; Rosenholtz, 1989).

Coaching has been found to be an effective strategy for developing instructional skills (Gersten, Morvant, & Brengelman, 1995). Preparing local educators with supervisory skills has been documented as an effective approach for supervising rural teachers-in-training (Billingsley & Jones, 1993). The coaching program described here was specifically designed to assist provisionally credentialed novice teachers in translating the skills of effective teaching into the day-to-day practice of their own classrooms. The program reduced their isolation as new teachers by involving them in a community of professional development and support designed to improve instructional practice and to lead to full certification.

In our program, coaches are fully-credentialed teachers selected jointly by the districts and the university. Following the initial three to four years of program implementation, almost all of the coaches have themselves been recent graduates of the Internship Credential program. Whenever possible, the coach is a teacher at the same school as the Intern, although sometimes the coach is from another school or even a neighboring district. The coaches make a minimum nine direct and indirect (i.e., video analysis) observations of the Interns each year. They receive back-up support from two regional program specialists as well as from the university's Intern Support Liaison (ISL). The ISL serves as coach and supervisor to the coaches and provides training to the coaches as well as to the regional program specialists. Every four to six weeks, the ISL meets with the coaches and program specialists for a half-day to review Intern progress and identify and problem-solve difficulties. As a group, they review video segments from selected Interns, with the ISL assisting coaches in refining their observation skills, identifying areas for Intern improvement, and providing training in coaching/mentoring. Immediately following these meeting, the ISL holds a two-hour Intern seminar in which segments of their videos are reviewed and Interns are guided in analyzing their own teaching behaviors. Needs identified in these meetings form the basis for future seminar meetings as well as all-day "Fast Track" workshops (up to four a year) that provide intensive training in identified areas of need. As instructor of both of the methods courses, the ISL was in an ideal position to work with the Interns to strengthen areas of weakness and to help the Interns bridge theory and practice

Videotaping Requirement

At the beginning of each year, the requirements and procedures for self-videotaping are reviewed. Interns are provided with instructions and forms for obtaining videotaping permission from parents/guardians. The university ISL also provides guidelines on how to obtain meaningful videotapes of their own teaching. They are encouraged to give careful thought and planning to the location of the camera, for accurate observation and recording depends on being able to see and hear both the teacher and the students. The ISL assures the interns that while teachers as well as students are inclined to behave differently in the camera's presence, this reactivity is usually short-lived. Once a camera is turned on and left in a stationary position, within in a fairly brief time span, participants typically behave as though the camera was not there.

Both the interns and their coaches receive explicit systematic instruction on evaluating their teaching within the context of the effective instruction paradigm. This paradigm is emphasized in both methods courses, so it is familiar to the Interns as well as their coaches. The ISL introduces, reviews, and provides guided practice on the direct observation form utilized for data collection. The Teacher Observation Form, developed over a the past decade by The Institute for Effective Education in San Diego, provides a fairly simple direct observation tool for monitoring teaching behaviors–either in oneself or in others. While it can be used in real-time observations, there are significant benefits to using the tool on videotaped lessons. Obviously, videotaping provides a feasible means to collect data on one's own behavior as well as for long-distance monitoring by a coach or university supervisor. Videotaped segments of teaching behavior can be reviewed privately, in supervision and/or training meetings. Not only can specific segments be replayed to check for observational accuracy, the videotape can be stopped while specific behaviors are analyzed and corrective actions recommended. Finally, videotape segments can document changes in teacher behaviors over time.

First semester Interns must record all three videotapes in the same subject area over the course of the semester. This makes it easier for them to identify changes in their teaching behaviors. The Intern reviews the entire 45-minute videotape and selects a 10 minute sample of teaching and analyzes it using the Teacher Observation Form. The Intern gives his/her coach a copy of the observation form and the Intern's coach reviews the full videotape, taking data on the same 10-minute video segment identified by the Intern. Typically, the coach and Intern then compare instructional observation data that they have collected and view the 10-minute videotape together to clear up any differences in data or to emphasize a particular behavior or set of behaviors that may need improvement. This occurs prior to the Intern's proceeding to the next videotaping assignment. The university ISL reviews individual videotapes at least once each semester and more frequently at the request of either the coach or the Intern. Through these processes, we determine whether the Intern's instructional skills are improving over time at an appropriate rate. If not, then more intensive one-on-one classroom intervention is provided for the Intern using a formal university-district collaborative support process (See Cegelka & Alvarado, in press).

Description of Observation Form

The Teacher Observation Form is designed to provide measures of key variables identified in the effective instruction literature (Algozzine & Ysseldyke, 1992; Bickel & Bickel, 1986; Englert, 1983; Englert, Tarrant, & Mariage, 1995; and Lloyd, Forness, & Kavale, 1998). These include (a) time allocated for and time engaged in delivery of instruction, (b) frequency and accuracy of student responses (both individual and group), and (c) consequences (both positive and negative) for student responses, recorded separately for academic and social behaviors. A number of additional effective instruction factors are rated in terms of quality/rate (high, medium, low) with which the Intern demonstrates them.

Instructional Data

Data is collected in three areas: instructional time, student academic responding, and consequences delivered by the teacher. Frequency data on student academic responding are analyzed relative to percent that are group versus individual responses. These data are also converted to responses rate per minute and percent of correct responses per minute. Data on consequences for student behaviors are analyzed to determine the relative number of positive consequences to all consequences. This is calculated by dividing the number of positive consequences by the total number of consequences and multiplying by 100.

Instructional Time. This basic information is gathered at the top of the form by recording information from the daily schedule or lesson plan and the actual start and stop time for the instruction. This data is most reliably collected during face-to-face observations, but can provide a useful reference for discussion between the intern and coach even when direct observation is not possible. The data permit the coach/supervisor to talk about whether sufficient academic time has been allocated and whether instruction actually occurred during the allocated time.

Student Responses. Both individual and student responses are recorded for the entire observation period. A slash indicates a correct response, a cross indicates an incorrect response, and a circle around a cross indicates that an error response was corrected by the teacher. Per minute responses can be calculated and comparisons made between correct responses per minute and incorrect responses per minute. Judgments can be made relative to the appropriateness of the response rate, and the "comments" sections next to the data summary lines provide an opportunity to recommend changes in teaching behaviors. Research has documented that high response rates are indicative of on-task behavior as well as student learning. This suggests that teachers should ask students to say, write or do something several times during each minute of the lesson. However, the optimal rate of student responses varies depending on the type of response (e.g., written responses will take longer) and the complexity of the responses (e.g., more time is required for answering an inferential comprehension question than for answering a literal comprehension question.). Student response data can indicate that instruction is at too easy or too difficult a level; it also provides an indication as to whether or not appropriate error-correction procedures are being employed by the Intern teacher.

Consequences. This measure evaluates what the teacher does just after student responses. Particular attention is given to the positive consequences the teacher provides for desirable (or "correct") student responding and to the negative consequences provided for undesirable (or "incorrect") student responding. The rule of thumb that we use is that there should be four positive consequences (e.g., praise statements) for every negative consequence (e.g., a rule reminder or a penalty of some sort). We record data separately for consequences to academic and social behaviors so that we can insure that this 4:1 ratio maintains for both categories of behaviors. Experience has shown us that our Intern teachers are likely to provide very high rates of positive consequences for academic behavior, but tend to ignore appropriate social behaviors. Instead, they respond primarily when social behavior is inappropriate, resulting in a low ratio of positive to negative consequences for social behaviors. However, the rate of positive consequences for academic behavior may be so high that the overall ratio of positives to negatives is still within the 4:1 range. By recording data separately, we can get a better picture of Intern performance for each category of behavior separately.

For positive consequences, we record praise statements as well a "other" modes of reinforcement (e.g., points, high-fives, thumbs up, etc.). **For negative consequences,** we record rule reminders separately from penalties (e.g., verbal scolding, token removal, time out, etc.). It is important to note that we view rule reminders as different from prompts. Rule reminders are responses to a failed occurrence of a behavior, and, as such, frequently turn into nags. Prompts are given as a part of a lesson to improve the likelihood of a given academic behavior. Hence, we do not view prompts as negative and do not record data on them. For each category of consequences, a box is provided where the recorder can write in examples of the consequences employed.

Other Effective Instruction Factors

The Instruction Observation Form also provides an opportunity to rate observer impressions of seven additional factors associated with effective instructional delivery. These factors are presented in the form of questions to which the observer may respond “high,” “medium,” or “low,” with space to make brief comments. The seven questions are:

- Are materials organized?
- Is transition time quick and smooth?
- Are students ready for the lesson?
- Is lesson delivered fluently?
- Are errors corrected immediately?
- Is independent work appropriate?
- Are other students monitored?

Comments Section

A section for comments is located at the bottom of the form and provides space for open-ended statements concerning observations made as well as for recommendations for improving instruction. Typically, the recommendations are based on data that was collected during the observation and is limited to one or two teaching behaviors that the observer feels are most critical at that point in time. These are the behaviors that the coach or university ISL will be particularly attentive to when viewing the next videotape.

Summary

The coach-of-coaches model is highly consistent with teacher retention recommendations found in the literature. Specifically, Peer supervision, or pairing new teachers with master teachers, has been widely recommended (Rosenholtz, 1989; Lemke, 1995; ler & Sidebottom, 1985; Muse & Thomas, 1992; Billingsley & Jones, 1993) as has designing opportunities for the beginning teachers to interact with one another (Davis, 1987; Swift, 1984, Miller & Sidebottom, 1985). Another recommended strategy is to provide opportunities for expanding into new professional roles, such as mentoring (Theis-Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1987). Given that so many of our Intern Credential teachers go on to become coaches may also contribute to the high retention rate (approximately 85%) for this program. Program coaches have given high ratings to the high levels of university-coach communications and to the quality of feedback that both coaches and interns receive and have indicated that their participation helps them to refine their own instructional expertise as well as to develop supervisory skills

The coach-of-coaches model has made it feasible to offer this university-based alternative credential program within a vast geographically isolated desert region of Southern California. This early and continuous mentoring appears to contribute to the early success of the participants as teachers, a factor in itself associated with high retention rates. Further, this support feature facilitates not only the professional development of the Intern teachers and the qualitative educational services for the children that they teach, but appears also to contribute to the retention of those who serve in coaching roles. An important thread that has tied these components together has been the focused monitoring made possible through the use of the Teacher Observation Form.

References

Algozzzine, B., & Ysseldyke ,J. (1992). Strategies and tactics for effective instruction. Longmont, C): Sopris West.

Bell, T. L., Bull, K. S., Barrett, J. M., Montgomery, D., and Hyle, A. E. (1993). Future special education teachers perceptions of rural teaching environments. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 12 (4), 31-38.

Bickel, W., & Bickel, D. (1986). Effective schools, classrooms, and instruction: Implications for special education. Exceptional Children, 52, 489-500.

Billingsley, B. O., & Jones, P. R. (1993). Instructional supervision in special education: Strategies for rural programs. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 12(2), 2 - 9.

Boe, E. E., Cook, L., Kaufman, M.J., & Danielosn, L. C. (1996. Special and general education teachers in public schools: Sources of supply in national perspective. Teacher Education and Special Education, 19, 1-16.

Bornfield, G., Hall, N., Hall, P., & Hoover, J. H.. (1997). Leaving rural special education positions: It's a matter of roots. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 36(1), 30 - 37.

Carr, S. C. (1995). A preservice model for preparing special educators in rural areas: Specialized competencies. In: Reaching to the future: Boldly facing challenges in rural communities. Conference Proceedings of the American Council on Rural Special Education (Las Vegas, NV, March 15 - 18, 1995).

Cegelka, P. T., & Alvarado, J. L. (in press) alternative teacher credential preparation: evaluation of an IHE-district collaboration in a rural area, Rural Special Education Quarterly.

Chapman, D. W., & Green, M. S. (1986). Teacher retention: A further examination. Journal of Educational Research, 79, 273-279.

Cole, J. T., & Leeper, L. H. (1995). What a long, strange trip it's been. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 12 (2) 53-56.

Collins, B. (1997). Training rural educators in Kentucky through distance learning: A model with follow-up data. Teacher Education and Special Education, 20, 234-248.

DeYoung, A. J. Ed. (1991). Rural Education: Issues and Practice. New York; Garland Publishing, Inc.

Englemann, S. (1988). The logic and facts of effective supervision. Education and Treatment of Children, 11, 280-340.

Englert,C. S. (1983). Measuring special education teacher effectiveness. Exceptional Children, 17, 1-16.

Englert, C.S., & Tarrant, K. L.,(1995). Creating collaborative cultures for educational change. Remedial and Special Education, 16, 325-336.

Englert, C.S., Tarrant, K. L, & Mariage, T. V. (1992). Defining and redefining instructional practice in special education: perspectives on good teaching. Teacher Education and Special Education, 15, 62-86.

Gamble, L. (1995). Preparing rural special educators using distance learning technologies. ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED 380 253.

Gersten, R., Morvant, M., & Brengelman, S. (1995). Close to the classroom is close to the bone: Coaching as a means to translate research into classroom practice. Exceptional Children, 62, 52-66.

Helge, D.I., & Mars, I. W. (1982). Personnel recruitment and retention in rural America: A growing problem. The Pointer, 26 (2), 28-33.

Hicks, J. (1994). Special education in rural areas: Validation of critical issues by selected state directors of special education: Final report. Alexandria, VA: NASDE (ERIC Reproduction Service NO. ED 738 767

Howard, S. W., Ault, M.M., Knowlton, H.E., & Swall, R.S. (1992). Distance education: promises and caution for special education. Teacher Education and Special Education, 15, 275-283.

Lloyd, J. W., Forness, S. R., & Kavale, K. A. (1998). Some merhods are more effective. Intervention in School and Clinic, 33(4), 195-200.

Ludlow, B. L. (1994). Using distance education to prepare early intervention personnel. Infants and Young Children, 7, 51-59.

Muse, I, & Thomas, G. (1992). Elementary education. In Galbraith, M. W. (Ed.) Education in the Rural American Community. (pp. 45 - 72). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company.

Reith H., & Evertson, C. (1988). Variables related to the effective instruction of difficult-to-teach children. Focus on Exceptional Children, 10 (5), 1-8.

Rosentholtz, S. (1989). Workplace conditions that affect teacher quality and commitment: Implications for teacher induction programs. The Elementary School Journal, 89, 421-439.

Theis-Sprinthall, L., & Sprinthall, M. (1987). Experienced teachers: Agents for revitalization and renewal as mentors and teacher educators. Journal of Education, 169, 65-79.

Wei, B., Shapero, S., Boggess, B. W. (1993). Training and retaining rural special educators. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 12, 52-59.

Welch, M. & Kukic, S. (1988). Utah's response to critical issues and needs; An experimental field-based preparation program for teachers of mild to moderately handicapped students. Teacher Education and Special Education, 11, 172-175.

Harvey A. Rude
University of Northern Colorado
Greeley, Colorado

Steven C. Street
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, North Dakota

DEFINING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATION

Introduction

The context of special education programs and services provided to learners with disabilities presents a unique challenge to principals, special education directors and other leadership personnel in a rural context. Frequently the demands placed on leadership personnel with mandated responsibilities for insuring a free and appropriate education to all learners with disabilities in the least restrictive and appropriate educational setting creates a set of dilemmas that stretch the potential leadership effectiveness of these personnel. Recent provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Public Law 105-17) enacted in 1997 have expanded this mandate to create an increasing expectation of accountability for the results of special education and related services to learners with disabilities. Some indicators of these expectations include: (1) the provision that learners with disabilities be afforded access to the general education curriculum; (2) the continuous improvement monitoring system initiated by the Office of Special Education Programs that delineates an intensive self-assessment and continuous improvement approach to insuring compliance with federal mandates for program compliance with legislative intent and administrate regulations; (3) an emphasis on results and demonstrated performance indicators for individual students that signify the successful outcomes for special education. The ability to measure the results of special education programs and services remains an elusive goal for most educators with leadership responsibilities for special education. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of effective leadership practices in a rural context with emphasis on systemic thinking for improved outcomes, data collection measures and management considerations, program planning and evaluation systems for effective change.

The Context of Rural Special Education

The legislative intent established through state and federal mandates for the education of students with disabilities has met with mixed success in rural schools and communities (Bryant, Dean, Elrod & Blackbourn, 1999; Hooper, Pankake & Schroth, 1999; Harriman, 1998). The presumed leadership that is necessary to convert policy intent into programmatic realities for students with disabilities is frequently missing at the central office, building, and classroom levels of rural leadership impact. Much of the difficulties and challenges inherent in the movement towards inclusive educational programs and services in rural settings is hampered by the lack of adequate resources, incomplete attention to emerging best practices that benefit all learners including those with disabilities, and competing attention for the attention of rural educational leaders who have multiple responsibilities and roles.

To address the complex demands placed on rural schools and the persons responsible for providing effective leadership to effectively implement programs and services that provide equal opportunities to learners with disabilities, a new set of leadership skills and practices is required. These skills and practices have emerged from the literature on promising professional development approaches for school leaders. Effective leadership for special education in a rural context promotes practices that result in improved systems, collaborative cultures, responsible organizations, and positive change within individuals. To address these outcomes, a systematic program of leadership development is valuable with identified components that include thinking from a systems perspective, managing from a results orientation, and leading to promote and implement change.

Leaders as Systemic Thinkers

Traditional thinking is a natural response to the daily pressures and demands of administrators in rural schools and communities. The culture and tradition of the school and community provide expectations for maintaining the bureaucracy and community norms that define the organizational identity. An ongoing challenge for effective school administrators is to constantly identify alternative approaches to thinking about the current realities that pose significant challenges to providing effective educational programs and services for all learners, including those with disabilities. The cultivation of systemic thinking is a learned skill for considering alternatives to existing practices that may depart substantially from accepted practices and priorities for providing a basic public education.

Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton & Kleiner (2000) identify examples of how systems thinking are found in the daily lives of educators and transfer to professional effectiveness. System dynamics and resultant thinking approaches provide leaders with more effective ways of interpreting the complexities of the world around them. To implement the ambitious requirements of access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities, effective leaders must challenge themselves to develop personal skills such as clarity, consistency, courage, and the ability to see interrelatedness. This takes individuals away from the comfort zone that is provided by the use of ambiguous and incomplete statements that serve to avoid the most difficult issues in the implementation of the special education mandates. It requires courage to tell the microscopic truth in ways the express precise understandings and lead to the construction of different alternatives that can benefit all learners (Quinn, 1996). Searching for precise understandings provides the impetus to look beyond the immediate situation on such commonly held perceptions including: students with disabilities are the responsibility of special education teachers, students who are not performing at grade level should not be required to participate in high stakes assessment programs, parents are to be notified of the general progress of their children with disabilities without inviting their participation, and inclusion of special needs students is a philosophy that has not been demonstrated to be successful in practice. In each of these examples, the systems thinking challenge for leaders is to suspend preconceived notions of what is right and intuitively obvious to search for a wider range of alternatives. This systemic thinking approach to the daily operation of special education programs and services provides a contrasting alternative for consideration to the traditional thinking approaches that guide the administrators who are responsible for most educational bureaucracies. The challenge of systems thinking is to advance understanding of social systems in the same manner that understanding of the physical world advanced over the twentieth century (Senge et. al, 2000). Dynamic leaders in rural America face the opportunity to think in terms that will create a better system of education that ultimately results in better systems design at all levels.

Leaders as Managers of Results

The education of students with disabilities is frequently implemented with little attention to the impact or intended outcome of the programs and services being provided. Most evaluation measures of individual student success and/or results are provided in terms that describe the variety of inputs, resources, and process approaches that are created for individual learners. This reliance on process measures does little to connect the students being educated with the intended results or outcomes to be achieved. In response to this common dilemma, advocates of accountability have advanced clear methods for describing and evaluating student outcomes in new ways that address the accountability measures demanded by the Government Performance and Results Act. Logic models of planned change represent logical linkages among program resources, activities, outputs, customers reached, and short, intermediate, and longer term outcomes (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999).

While the terms employed to describe the logic model framework are varied (see Teather & Montague, 1997; Patton, 1997; Montague, 1997;) the basic intent of this approach is to clearly identify stakeholder perceptions of how effectively the programs and services will work in producing desired results and outcomes for individual learners. The process of constructing a logic model entails the following five steps: (1) collecting the relevant information; (2) clearly defining the problem and its context; (3) defining the elements of the logic model; (4) drawing the logic model; and, (5) verifying the logic model with stakeholders. Each of these important steps seeks to answer the critical question: "What are we trying to achieve with our special education programs and services and why is it important?"

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (1997) identified a dynamic model of accountability that considered the need to balance the concerns for input/process accountability, student learning outcome accountability, and system standards accountability. Leaders of special education programs and services in rural American are faced with the management tasks of creating an evaluation framework based on these components that lead to a vision of balanced accountability, represent an educational system, and ensure that all children, including those with disabilities, benefit from their educational experience. Benefits are measured through determinations of equal access, high standards, and high expectations resulting in caring, productive, and socially involved citizens.

The historical roots of the balanced accountability model are drawn from the Institute of Cultural Affairs of Chicago (1970) which views social process in terms of three fundamental components including economical/foundational aspects, political/organizational aspects, and cultural/meaning giving aspects. Ideally, each of the three components is robust and provides a unique contribution to the balance of an inter-related system. Frequently a relative imbalance will occur which allows one of these aspects to function as a tyrant undermining the balance of the other two. In the remaining two aspects of the model, one factor assumes an ally position in support of the tyrant and the other has the potential to collapse from neglect. For example, many Native American Nations have adopted organized gambling to address the economic/foundational aspect of their identity. The ally in this equation frequently becomes the governmental rules and regulations in support of the gaming industry from a political/organizational perspective. The potential for collapse is felt by the cultural/meaning giving aspect of the tribal government that provides the official sanction to these activities. When the economic tyrant pairs with a political ally, the culture and language of the tribe is lost as a result.

The religious sect known as the Shakers provides another example of the delicate balance that is easily lost in questions of social equilibrium. Shakers have adopted a set of cultural/meaning giving imperatives that forbid procreation among its members. When the cultural tyrant is paired with the political ally, the economical foundation of the society collapses since the culture is unable to sustain itself over time.

The Academy asks state professional development systems to focus on the ideal balance of educational equity, individual student achievement for all learners, and program effectiveness at the system level. The mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Public Law 105-17) have resulted in an over-reliance on input/process accountability, with varying degrees of collapse in the success with individual student learning outcomes and system level outcomes of educational success.

Balanced systems of accountability emphasize inputs and process in equal measure with the more difficult accountability concepts of individual learning outcomes and systems standards outcomes. One of the stumbling blocks to achieving this desirable balance is the lack of common language with which to describe a desired level of outcome in terms that are consistent and contribute to general understanding among the customers and providers of professional development. Friedman (1999) identified four essential questions of accountability that provide guidance in the area as follows: (1) What do we want for our children and families? This identifies the desired results; (2) How do we know if we have achieved the results we want? This suggests the types of indicators of effectiveness we are willing to accept; (3) What works to achieve the outcomes we want? This delineates the strategies that lead to the desired indicators and results; and, (4) How do we know the elements of our strategy are performing as well as possible? These provide a description of the qualitative change outcomes that become performance measures for effective management of results.

Leaders as Agents and Implementers of Change

The difference between results and performance measures is significant. Results measures are much broader in scope, and speak to the broad range of factors that are producing the results, indicators, and strategies that lead to the current situation in professional development. From a logic model perspective (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999), results measures are the result of a variety of factors. Many of the causal factors are beyond the scope of a leader's influence and accountability. Performance measures, by contrast, provide measures of program effectiveness for which the total school system architects are the principal owners. Performance accountability focuses primarily on the relationship between strategies and performance measures in programs and services that are provided to students with disabilities. In essence, the specification of performance measures answers the question: "What change did we produce, and how well did we do it?" The types of information that provide evidence of effectiveness would include cost/benefit analyses, computation of return on investment, and customer results/outcomes. Friedman (1999) stresses the critical need to establish baseline information regarding quality performance measures. To establish the compelling case for change, it is essential to think about the story behind the baseline and what can be done to improve upon existing performance.

The leadership challenge for educators who seek to make a difference in the lives of learners with disabilities in rural schools is to effect changes in the substance of programs and services that lead to improved outcomes and results. Change models must depend on the necessary components of change leaders, change guides, and implementers of the new ways of doing business. It is important for leaders of planned change to articulate a clear vision of the future condition based on a compelling case for change that is clear, concise, and generally irreversible. This provides the elements of effective support that address the critical factors that can derail the best of intentions for change initiatives (Horsley & Kaser, 1999).

Summary

The accountability link between leadership effectiveness and increased results for all learners requires the use of new tools that have the potential to support viable systems of accountability. The consideration of leadership for systemic thinking, leadership for improved management of results, and leadership for initiation and implementation of planned change are critical tools to enhance the efficacy of administrators and other program leaders serving students with disabilities in rural settings.

A system of effective leadership to meet the unique needs of diverse learners with disabilities must address the perspectives of all stakeholders ranging from the most populated and urban environments to the most isolated and rural communities. Management systems must pay attention to all elements of the system which encompasses the pre-service preparation of aspiring educators at the higher education levels of impact to the continuing education concerns of the most experienced and skillful practitioners in the field. Special education and general education concerns must be blended into a single system that includes the interests of all learners, including the most difficult to serve in the most isolated and remote areas of the country.

References

Badaracco, J. L., & Ellsworth, R. R. (1989). Leadership and the quest for integrity. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Bemowski, K. (1996). Leaders on leadership. Quality Progress, 29 (11), 77-79.

Bryant, R., Dean, M., Elrod, G. F. & Blackbourn, J. M. (1999). Rural general education teachers' opinions of adaptations for inclusive classrooms: A renewed call for dual licensure. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 18 (1), 5-11.

Council for Exceptional Children. (1998). The national institute on the comprehensive system of personnel development: Evaluation report. Reston, VA: Author.

Covey, S. R. (1989). The seven habits of highly effective people. New York: Fireside.

Corcoran, T. (1995). Transforming professional development for teachers: A guide for state policy makers. Washington, DC: National Governors' Association.

Fowler, F. (2000). Policy studies for educational leaders: An introduction. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Friedman, M. (1999). Results and performance accountability. Baltimore, MD: Fiscal Policy Studies Institute.

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1999). What's worth fighting for in your school? Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

Guskey, T. (1995). Professional development in education: IN search of the optimal mix. In T. Guskey & M. Huberman (Eds.), Professional development in education: New paradigms and practices. New York: Teachers College Press.

Harriman, N. (1998). Inclusive teaching in rural schools: Expanding on tradition. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 17 (1), 21-27.

Hooper, H. H., Pankake, A. & Schroth,G. (1999). Inclusion in rural school districts: Where is the superintendent? Rural Special Education Quarterly, 18 (1), 23-27.

Horsley, D., & Kaser, J. (1999). How to keep a change initiative on track. Journal of Staff Development, 20 (4), 40-45.

Institute of Cultural Affairs of Chicago. (1970). The social dynamics of humanness. Chicago, IL: Author.

Karasoff, P. (1998). Collaborative partnerships: A review of the literature. In J. Jones (Ed.), Profiles in collaboration: A comprehensive report of the Professional Development Partnership Projects. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development.

McLaughlin, J. A., & Jordan, G. B. (1999). Logic models: A tool for telling your program's performance story. Evaluation and Program Planning, 22 (1), 65-72.

Montague, S. (1994). The three R's of performance-based management. Focus, December-January.

National Association of State Directors of Special Education. (1996). NASDSE's plan for strategic action. Alexandria, VA: Author.

National Association of State Directors of Special Education. (1997). Guiding principles for an inclusive accountability system. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Ohanian, S. (2000). One size fits all: The folly of educational standards. Westport, CT: Heinemann Publishers.

Patton, M. Q. (1997). Utilization-focused evaluation: The new century text. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Quinn, R. (1996). Deep change: Discovering the leader within. San Francisco. CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sculley, P. J. (1996). TQM and human nature: Getting beyond organizational misconceptions. Quality Progress, 29 (5), 75-78.

Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J. & Kleiner, A. (2000). Schools that learn: A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education. New York: Doubleday Publishers.

Sergiovanni, T. (1999). The lifeworld of leadership: Creating culture, community, and personal meaning in our schools. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sparks, D. (1995). Focusing staff development on improving student achievement. Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Teather, G., & Montague, S. (1997). Performance measurement, management and reporting for S & T organizations: An overview. Journal of Technology Transfer, 22, 2.

Uhlfelder, F. H. (1997). Ten critical traits of group dynamics. Quality Progress, 30 (4), 69-72.

Catherine Shea, Ph.D.
School of Education
Indiana University Southeast
New Albany, IN 47150
cshea@ius.edu

Carolyn Babione, Ph.D.
School of Education
Indiana University Southeast
New Albany, IN 47150
cbabione@ius.edu

THE ELECTRONIC ENHANCEMENT OF SUPERVISION PROJECT (EESP)

Like their urban counterparts, rural districts can find themselves facing a real and recalcitrant shortage of special education teachers. In a nutshell, too few train, too few seek positions, and too few stay. Improving initial training for those already in the pipeline can contribute to reducing the shortage.

As pivotal teacher preparation components, field experiences are common sense targets for addressing the personnel shortage. Improving these experiences can ensure that those who are in the pipeline stay the course and exit with the skills and confidence to seek and remain in a special education teaching position.

Field experiences typically involve a pre-service teacher, a university supervisor and the classroom supervisor. Because the classroom teacher works directly with the university student, his/her ability to coach the pre-service teacher is critical to the experience. It is precisely these coaching skills that are the focus of a grant project involving P-12 teachers and teacher education faculty from a regional campus of a large university. Two notable features of the project are the use of P-12 master teachers as mentors to other teachers and the utilization of technology including desktop conferencing, webpage, and listserver.

Review of Literature

In 1998, a task force in Indiana reviewed professional literature and analyzed data regarding recruiting, training and retraining fully certified teachers in special education. Their report, *Who Will Teach Indiana's Children with Special Needs?* corroborate and contextualize the shortage of special education teachers (ISEAS, 1998). Particularly disheartening, as cited by the report, was the number of licensed special educators who do not seek positions or quit after a few years. In rural districts, the loss of just one special educator is significant.

Those who enter the profession leave for numerous reasons, and among those is feeling ill-prepared to handle job responsibilities. Classroom teachers are currently experiencing new, more complex work demands associated with the inclusion movement, a transforming school trend described as "the most significant movement in special education in the past two decades" (Kirk, Gallagher, and Anastasiow, 2000, p. 58).
Each new role brought about by changes in how schools serve students creates new stresses and strains for the special and general education teachers who train new teacher candidates in their classrooms. Consequently, some special education classroom supervisors are faced with modeling and explaining their own, barely emerging, skills to teacher education students. Thus, in fact, the "expert" might feel less the expert but instead the struggling learner him/herself.

Teacher preparation institutions need to be concerned about such difficulties because of their impact on pre-service teachers. The transformation of a college student to a fledgling teacher "does not occur on the college campus under the watchful eye of a professor but in an elementary or secondary school under the direction of a classroom teacher" (Henry and Beasley, 1996, p. 2). Feelings of being less than "expert" potentially compromise the supervising teacher's ability to effectively direct or coach a student teacher. Teachers who lack experience, confidence or self-analysis skills may be ineffective in their abilities to successfully coach their student teachers.

Though teacher preparation programs have long recognized the need to support and train supervising teachers, the realities in special education pose unique challenges to insuring high quality field experiences. The personnel turnover rate and rapidly expanding job roles require a rethinking of such support and training. Finding ways to support and upgrade the supervision skills of supervising special education teachers, especially when they are at distance from campuses in rural locations, is needed.

Typically, training and support for supervising teachers have been accomplished through providing direct (live) or indirect (printed materials) training about the roles, responsibilities and effective strategies for supervision. Less commonly, an experienced supervisor is assigned to mentor a supervising cooperating teacher.

This practice of pairing a less experienced protégé with a guide has a long history. Mentoring dates back at least to Greek methodology as Odysseus, while fighting the Trojan Wars, entrusted his son Telemachus to his friend and advisor, Mentor. While the mentee receives a thoughtful and objective perspective, the mentor is also strengthened professionally by the relationship (Lightly, 2000; Weeks, 1997).

Another strategy for improving rural supervising teachers' ability to coach pre-service students is to utilize technology. As early as the 1960s, technology was explored as a way to reduce expensive, time-consuming on-site training (Henrie and Whiteford, 1972). Distance education continues to be explored as an effective approach to in-service education (Foegen, Howe, Deno and Robinson, 1998; Wepner, 1997) and has been used with varying degrees of success with special education programs (Spooner, Spooner, Algozzine and Jordan, 1998; Williams, 1995). The advent of web-based technology has brought about new opportunities to hone supervisors' skills in ways that result in better student experiences. These improvements in turn are hoped to result in more confidence and skill for both supervisors and their student teachers.

A Partnership to Improve Supervision Skills

The 2000 Ameritech Fellows Grant was designed to partner Indiana University Southeast (a regional public university) with special education teachers in the southern Indiana region. The Electronic Enhancement of Supervision Project (EESP) integrated technology with supervision training of special education teachers in an effort to expand the knowledge base regarding distance education and special education preparation. The goal of EESP was to strengthen the supply and quality of special education teachers through better training of special education cooperating teachers, the critical partners in teacher preparation. Standing apart from other distance learning endeavors, EESP utilized master special educators as mentors to partner and collaborate with the university's training of cooperating teachers. The mentoring emphasis was designed to address the isolation and lack of professional development opportunities often experienced by rural special education teachers. A central aspect of EESP was to capitalize on the skills of master teachers in the P-12 setting to revamp training and support provided to classroom supervising teachers.

The project was comprised of four phases. Beginning in the summer of 2000, Phase I prepared three supervisor-mentor master teachers to mentor special education cooperating teachers. Phase I included training in technologies such as webcams and discussion listserver. Phase II began Fall 2000 to develop a website for the program, pilot the technology in schools, and identify six classroom teachers for Phase III. Phase III will be completed during Spring 2001 with six classroom teachers who will be mentored via listerver by the supervisor-mentors. The six classroom teachers will also receive additional supervision training and support from IUS faculty through webcam, listserver, websites, and site visits. Phase IV was designed to develop final conclusions and recommendations that could benefit others who embark on the endeavor to mentor electronically. The project team included two resident faculty at Indiana University Southeast (IUS), an IUS staff member from the Institute for Learning and Teaching Excellence program, a university student technician, three school-based supervisor-mentors, and six special education cooperating teachers.

Phase I

In Phase I, university faculty worked collaboratively with three master special education teachers to prepare them for the role of "supervisor-mentors" to other special education teachers. The purposes of this phase were to: 1) expand the supervisor-mentors' knowledge about current models regarding supervision and mentoring, 2) empower these mentor teachers to take an active role in the development of the project, including critically analyzing the concepts and theories used for their applicability to the special needs classroom, 3) experiment with communication technology as an avenue to facilitate mentoring other special education teachers, and 4) identify potential problems linking technology between university and school settings.

Early into the Phase I experience, the supervisor-mentors were each interviewed to gain information about personal beliefs and experiences about mentoring. The interviews revealed that the supervisor-mentors had limited previous training in supervising adults and relied heavily on the only experience they could draw on for this mentoring—personal perceptions of mentoring obtained from their cooperating teachers when they were student teachers. When asked to describe the qualities of a good mentor, each referred to her own student teaching experience when, as a novice, their cooperating teacher had successfully or unsuccessfully contributed to their professional growth. Whether the student teaching experience was perceived as "positive" or "negative," the three supervisor-mentors each referred to her student teaching cooperating teacher as a "model" who was drawn upon as each supervised adults. When the student teaching experience had been perceived as negative, the supervisor-mentor indicated that she was trying not to do what her cooperating teacher had done. If the experience was positive, the supervisor-mentor perceived she was replicating the perceived characteristics of her cooperating teacher when supervising adults in her classroom. Regardless of how long ago the student teaching experience was, each supervisor-mentor acknowledged her student teaching cooperating teacher was influential if not her only model. Another interesting aspect of their pre-service experience is that all three had initially been trained in elementary general education rather than special education.

Phase I provided mentor training, including the following models, theories, and stages believed relevant to field supervision:

- IUS field experience policy (Shea, 1999)
- developmental stages of student teachers (Piland and Anglin, 1993; Slick, 1995)
- communication strategies (Shaw-Baker, 1995)
- models in supervision (Henry and Beasley, 1996)
- characteristics of effective mentoring (Kay, 1990; Portner, 1998; Rowley, 1999)

Phase I included opportunities for the supervisor-mentors to discuss the degree of applicability of these training materials for the special education setting. Drawing on their personal and professional experiences as special education teachers, the supervisor-mentors provided modifications to the models and strategies that they believed would be more effective for addressing challenges in the special education setting.

The supervisor-mentors expressed strong beliefs that the special education classroom presents a number of challenges that call for a different response than what might be appropriate in the regular classroom setting. For example, while it is important for every student teacher to understand classroom policies (e.g., health and discipline) and school procedures within the first few weeks of the student teaching experience, the EESP supervisor-mentors strongly believed that student teachers in special education classrooms are more likely to need this information on "day one" and should probably be given this information before the first week of student teaching. Special education student teachers are often expected to begin working immediately in the special education setting, often with an individual student. Mistakes or misunderstood directions can be catastrophic for special education students on medications or behavior intervention plans. Oversights in the special education services to students may result in official complaints, hearings or litigation. These unique needs were addressed by modifying strategies and models of supervision (see website at http://homepages.ius.edu/LZ/webeesp/web_docs/).

Phase I also involved creating scenarios of issues that special education teachers could encounter with a student teacher. For example, special education student teachers are more likely to face complex interpersonal situations involving working with other teachers in the inclusive regular education classroom and role boundaries of teaching assistants. Though general education student teachers are likely to also experience role boundaries, the special education student teacher often experiences multiple collaborations which they must negotiate. The supervisor-mentors shared that although theoretically collaboration is "owned" by general and special education, it is often the special education teacher who by virtue of monitoring responsibilities feels the weight of keeping the professional relationship afloat.

The supervisor-mentors created short scenarios of issues that could be more problematic in the special education setting and practiced requesting advice via the listserver from the other supervision-mentors and university faculty. One such scenario described a potential conflict between the student teacher and the instructional assistant:

> My student teacher recently experienced a problem in dealing with one of our instructional assistants. The assistant directed a student to finish an assignment given to him the previous day. This direction occurred following the student teacher's directive to put away all other work and to complete the assignment just given by her. My student teacher is certain that the assistant heard her make this statement. The student teacher chose not to talk to the assistant and is just stewing about it instead. I have some ideas. What would you suggest?

Phase II

Phase II incorporated additional opportunities to gather input from the supervisor-mentors about the project, keep them updated on new developments, create a website that would include the information provided by these mentors, and link the technology between the schools and university so that "trial runs" could be made. This trial run period was designed to uncover and solve difficulties that supervisor-mentors might also encounter with the six special education cooperating teachers who would join the project the following semester during Phase III.

The three supervisor-mentors were continually encouraged to think critically about the strategies and models reviewed, analyzing them for applicability to the special education setting. This information was included in the development of the website. Challenges to creating the website included finding the most effective way to capture the " collective voice" of the supervisor-mentor teachers' suggestions and display this information so that it could be easily accessed by other busy special educators supervising student teachers.

The greatest challenges of Phase II included both technology and human elements. The technology issues included mismatches of equipment between the university and individual schools, unusable machines, firewalls, and transmission quality. The human issues were: 1) participating teachers who had competing school responsibilities that diverted their attention away from responding via e-mail and listserver to weekly updates and queries about the EESP project, and 2) untangling the technology in the maze of university and P-12 bureaucracies that were imbedded in both systems.

Questions that were dealt with during this phase included:

- How much time can we realistically expect from the three supervisor-mentors for mentoring of other supervising teachers when there are no accommodations made for any type of release time for the project? (e.g., Our supervisor-mentors told us during Phase I that they are often the last to leave their classrooms, receiving no additional compensation for record keeping that necessitates their longer day.)
- What can we learn about linking universities to school corporations given the bureaucracy that exists at both ends?
- How do transmission imperfections and lag time affect the communication process?
- Who are the key P-12 decision makers who authorize the "chain of events" to get the technology in place?

Phase III and IV

Phase III was designed to provide electronic communication between special education classroom teachers, the three trained supervisor-mentor teachers, and the two IUS faculty. The technology utilized webcam, listservers, e-mail, and a website with additional special education supervision training materials. More information will be forthcoming at the completion of Phase III and the final review in Phase IV.

Implications

EESP is a collaborative project that can be adopted or adapted to other special education programs. The technology-based mentoring holds potential for learning, maintaining and updating supervision skills of P-12 teachers supervising pre-service teachers.

Beneficial aspects of the project identified from Phase I focus on the importance of using P-12 master teachers to collaborate with university faculty on aspects of program development including performance-based changes. Asking teachers to utilize their expertise as special education teachers to adapt traditional supervision models affirms practitioners' shared responsibility for teacher preparation and provides a "reality check" for university faculty.

The second implication that Phase II of this grant provides at this time is the issue surrounding the bureaucracy that has grown up around technology, in both P-12 and university settings. The weight of bureaucracies is exacerbated by either too few or too many rules and guidelines, all good intentioned. In the scheme of things, a project of significant importance to two university faculty members can pale in comparison with the issues and day-to-day challenges experienced in P-12, and vice-a-versa. An uneven valence of urgency can produce dissatisfaction on both sides, neither side being wrong in their priorities. The technology bureaucracies in these institutions may serve as one more challenge that schools of education may encounter when trying to strengthen partnerships with our rural education practitioners.

References

Foegen, A., Howe, K., Deno, S., & Robinson, S. (1998). Enhancing the potential of distance education: A case study involving groupware. Teacher Education and Special Education, 21(2), 132-149.

Henrie, H. H., & Whiteford, E.B. (1972). The teleconference: A supervisory procedure in educational clinical experience. (ED 160761).

Henry, M., & Beasley, W. (1996). Supervising student teachers. Sycamore Press.

ISEAS University Forum Task Force on Critical Personnel Needs. (1998). Who Will Teach Indiana's Children with Special Needs? Terre Haute, IN: Blumberg Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Special Education, Indiana State University.

Kay, R. (1990). A definition for developing self-reliance. In T. Bey & C. Holmes (Eds.). Mentoring: Developing successful new teachers. ATE Publication.

Kirk, S.A., Gallagher, J.J., & Anastasiow, N. (2000). Education of Exceptional Children. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Lightly, J. (2000). Mentoring relationships. Des Moines Business Record, 16(17), 27.

Piland, D., & Anglin, J. (1993). It is only a stage they are going through: The development of student teachers. Action in Teacher Education, 15(3), 19-26.

Portner, H. (1998). Mentoring new teachers. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Rowley, J. (1999). The good mentor. Educational Leadership, 56(8), 20-22.

Shaw-Baker, M. (1995). Communication the key to successful field experiences. In Slick,G.A. (1995). Making the difference for teachers: The field experience in actual practice. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Shea, C. (1999). Special education student teaching handbook. IUS document.

Slick, G. (Ed). (1995). The field experience. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Spooner, F., Spooner, M., Algozzine, B., & Jordan, L. (1998). Distance education and special education: Promises, practices, and potential pitfalls. Teacher Education and Special Education, 21(2), 121-131.

Weeks, D. (1997). 21st-Century mentoring. World Traveler. September.

Wepner, S. (1997). "You never run out of stamps" electronic communication in field experiences. Journal of Educational Computing Research, 16(3), 251-268.

Williams, E. (1995). Distance education as a future trend for pre and inservice education. (ED 381 326).

James Burton
West Virginia University
P.O. Box 6122
604B Allen Hall
Morgantown WV 26506
EBDProject@aol.com

Lynn McMullen
West Virginia University
P. O. Box 6122
606B Allen Hall
Morgantown WV 26506
lmcmulle@wvu.edu

ENHANCING TEACHER PARTNERSHIPS: INNOVATIONS IN PROFESSIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

In rural communities surrounding West Virginia University, students with disabilities are increasingly being included in general education settings, although many general educators do not feel adequately prepared to appropriately educate students with special needs. This trend towards greater inclusion of all students in the general education classroom in general education classrooms necessitates creation of innovative professional skills development programs for both pre-service and in-service general educators. The master's level practicum component of West Virginia University's Emotional / Behavioral Disorders Rural Inclusion Project (E/BD Project) provides higher education support over an entire academic year for practicing teachers who are working to enhance inclusion strategies.

Collaborative, mentoring relationships among project members and reflective activities throughout the year-long practicum allow teachers to structure their own professional development. The collaborative practicum experience encourages development of professional skills in curriculum design and modification; collaboration with school professionals, families, and social agencies; and technology use.

E/BD Project practicum components

Curriculum development, implementation and modification. During the initial phases of the project, participants developed specific content units to use in their classroom. The development of these units was used to facilitate teacher reflection about instructional delivery within their classroom and about the appropriateness of their teaching for all included students. Teachers were coached to consider using a variety of instructional methods to better fit the learning requirements of each student in their classrooms. Teachers were also asked to reflect on assessment procedures used to measure students' progress and encouraged to step away from traditional pencil-paper assessment procedures. Using their content unit, teachers then considered ways to use cooperative grouping, peer tutoring and other methods designed to address the social skills development of all students included in the classroom. Expanding on their content unit, teachers were asked to examine other curricula in their classroom and develop modifications, accommodations, and adaptations for each student's individual needs.

Teachers who work in traditional content areas were reinforced for using instructional methodologies that vary from the expository teaching model. The use of active learning was encouraged in order to reach a greater number of students. Teachers reported on the efficacy of the newly utilized instructional strategies, with most acknowledging that it did not drastically increase the amount of preparation, but did increase students' time on-task. Supervisors monitoring the implementation of this component noticed that teachers who were not from traditional core curricular areas were uniquely fascinating. Teachers of physical education and art demonstrated model examples of multi-modal instruction in order to meet the needs of a significantly larger proportion of included students.

Home – school communication. Although communication between home and school is critical to insuring a student's success in an inclusive educational setting, the development of effective means of communicating is especially problematic. Teachers may lack training in communication strategies between home and school. Further, teachers that have not experienced success in past communication with parents may be reluctant to try again. During the practicum, teachers identified barriers that may impede successful parent-teacher communication. Communication systems other than the traditional "teacher's note" were considered and encouraged. Sample communication methods included journals, e-mails, and teleconferences. Teachers also developed means to communicate with families during times that would accommodate parents' schedules (i.e., evenings, weekends, holidays).

Technology use. Technology use in schools has expanded greatly in recent years. Many of the teachers' schools in the project were in rural locations and the need to expose teachers and students to technology in these settings may be even more critical than in urban or suburban schools. In addition, higher education professionals involved in the project considered technology skills as essential for success in today's academic world. Therefore, mentors attempted to expand teachers' concept of technology beyond computers, by incorporating technology components in curricular units. Some content units included computers, calculators, telephones, tape recorders, VCRs, and DVD players. Some teachers mastered more sophisticated computer applications such as computer presentation software, record keeping software, or electronic communication. Project staff demonstrated the usefulness of technology in communication between and among professionals in distant locations. The staff initially created a weekly web-based newsletter that could be accessed at the convenience of the individual participant. This newsletter informed the participants about various opportunities for professional skill development. Some participants modified the format of "EBD Project News" to use with students and families in their communities.

Skills in collaboration. Within the project, collaboration between professionals was considered critical for the successful inclusive education of students with emotional / behavioral disabilities. True collaboration takes time, effort, and development of desired interpersonal skills to result in effective interventions for students with disabilities. Teachers in the project were challenged to practice new methods for professional collaboration in discussing educational best practice for included students with disabilities. As part of the practicum experience, teachers reflected and demonstrated their ability to work in collaborative settings with administration, other educators, support services, and community agencies, in IEP meetings, student assistance team meetings or other professional collaborative meetings.

Community support agencies. Schools are an integral piece of a community's resources to support child growth and learning. In rural communities, social service resources other than schools may be scarce or difficult to access. During the practicum, teachers researched and described local service agencies that provided benefits for students with emotional / behavioral disabilities and their families. In order to provide the information to families, teachers developed "handbooks" that specified the availability and location of various services. The handbook was designed to help parents make informed decisions about certain services. Each handbook included details about counseling services (for students and families), medical care, dental care, social work services, support groups and systems, peer development, and recreational groups. Where applicable, contact persons from the agencies were listed, along with telephone numbers, and both traditional and e-mail addresses. Teachers made their handbooks available to the local school systems and kept copies as a reference in their classrooms. Where applicable, contact people were indicated along with telephone, address, and e-mail for the agencies.

Contrast with traditional practica

Both the traditional student teaching practica and the E/BD Project practicum offered at West Virginia University are available to students who are enrolled in a master's level categorical special education program. The E/BD Rural Inclusion Project, however, pilots several innovations in the practicum experience in comparison with traditional special education practica.

In the traditional experiences, practicum students spend either 8 or 16 weeks in a part-time or full-time on the job placement. The traditional practicum is guided by a comprehensive handbook, which includes directions for observing and analyzing the teaching methodologies of other teachers; completing an action inquiry project; videotaping two lesson presentations; and maintaining both a professional portfolio and an interactive, reflective journal. A master's level cooperating teacher from the local school district and a University supervisor observe a total of 12 lessons presentations over the course of the practicum. At the end of the practicum term, the University supervisor and cooperating teacher independently assess the student's competence as a special educator according to

12 guidelines described in the handbook. Students are rated as having met or exceeded the criteria for effective teaching behaviors described in each competency area.

For the E/BD Project, teachers who were already employed in inclusive settings formed a cohort to complete special education coursework together and worked cooperatively on practicum requirements over an entire academic year. University supervisors for the Project visited practicum students in their schools at least 10 times during the school year. Supervisors conducted practicum seminars and taught required special education classes for members of the Project cohort, and maintained communication systems (i.e., e-mail and web pages) to support collaboration among cohort members and with higher education personnel. Cohort members selected activities to foster and document their growth in professional development; technology use; parent/teacher communication; curriculum development, implementation, modification and adaptation; collaboration skills; and knowledge of community service agencies.

Student perceptions. Project member teachers reported favorably about the innovative method for completing the practicum experience. Many reflected that components of the practicum support work being done in their rural classrooms. They enjoyed the opportunity to evaluate their own professional skills and to select areas of professional development that they felt are both practical and immediately applicable. Many of the participants appreciated the close mentoring relationship that often developed between university supervisor and project participant.

University supervisor perceptions. The year-long E/BD Project practicum allowed University personnel to develop collaborative rather than short-term, directive relationships with master's level teachers in the field. The trust developed between cohort members and University personnel opened the door for on-going collaborative research and service efforts. Supervisory visits to the schools in which cohort members are employed and the experiences shared by cohort members helped supervisors to understand the impact of current educational policies, philosophies, reform efforts and environmental factors that may foster or constrain implementation of best practice. Practicum supervision thus served as a "reality check" for University personnel who are often involved in local and state-level special education policy development or reform efforts.

Teacher self-reflective practices

The E/BD Project practicum adhered to the design principles for learner-centered professional development advocated by Hawley and Valli (2000). Practicum requirements focused on needs of specific students with disabilities included in the classes taught by cohort members. Authentic and immediate problems that cohort members experienced in working with included students were addressed according to the individual student's needs in the context of their unique environment and available resources. The educators themselves identified the problems and collaboratively generated solutions for effective inclusion of students with disabilities.

Practicum cohort members selected development goals for themselves in each of the six components which structured the practicum experience—professional development, technology use, parent-teacher communication, collaboration skills, curriculum development and modification, and knowledge of community support agencies. Goals selected and fulfilled ranged from development of primary level curriculum units, to modification and adaptation of content area coursework for high school students with disabilities; from increasing awareness of child-abuse reporting methods to implementing web-based parent communication systems. Teachers developed on-line collaborative partnerships, conducted research, submitted articles for publication, presented information at conferences and conducted school-based professional development activities for faculty members not involved in the Project cohort. They examined their beliefs about students with disabilities, schools as institutions, curriculum content, federally mandated individualized educational program (IEP) processes and results, state mandated instructional goals and objectives (IGOs), and their own instructional practices. Thus, the E/BD Rural Inclusion Project design has provided a model program for learner-centered professional development in its practicum experience.

Future suggestions

Based on program results, participant and staff reactions, the following suggestion should be considered by higher education institutions when creating teacher preparation practicum programs at the Master's level.

- Promote program flexibility. Program components should be flexible enough to encourage personal skills development in all students. The flexibility should assist in preventing repetition of skills mastered at the undergraduate level and encourage the student to develop previously under-developed skills.

- Increase the amount of time spent in practicum placement. Students and supervisors can better evaluate pre-selected competencies over a longer period of time. As in the traditional program at WVU, eight weeks may not be long enough in order to determine mastery of skills.

- Develop internship requirements. Colleges which offer other professional degrees (i.e., social work, medicine, business) require an internship. This could help student to determine true areas of interest and weakness. This process could assist in the gatekeeping of the profession. Closer work with professional educators could help to identify students who would not be successful in special education classroom settings.

- Mandate closer involvement by college advisors. Many times students progress through programs without meeting their advisors. For future programs, institutions may require closer work by their faculty not only during course instruction but also during the practicum piece of the program to assure a true professional evaluation of student skills.

- Form cohorts. As indicated earlier in this article, students formed positive relationships, taught concepts, and assisted one another in development of collaboration. Students reported that the cohort piece to this project was one of the best aspects.

References

Hawley, W. D. & Valli, L. (2000). Research bulletin: Learner-centered professional development. News, Notes and Quotes Newsletter of Phi Delta Kappa International, 45(1), 7-10.

McLesky, J. & Henry, D. (1999). Inclusion: What progress is being made across states? Teaching Exceptional Children, 31(5), 56-62).

Joan P. Sebastian, Ed.D.
Associate Professor
Coordinator, DistanceTeacher Education

John C. Mayhew, Ph.D.
Clinical Instructor Practicum Supervisor
Distance Teacher Education
Department of Special Education
University of Utah
1705 E. Campus Ctr Dr. 221
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

EVOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH'S RURAL TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM: PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE

Since 1981 the Department of Special Education at the University of Utah has provided distance teacher preparation programs to assist rural school districts throughout the state of Utah in its recruitment and retention of special educators. The model developed by the University, in collaboration with local school districts and the State Office of Education, has evolved in response to the changing needs and issues in rural school districts and the University. The purpose of this paper is to review the evolution of this model, describe how the various stakeholders in this partnership have worked together to continue its development, and identify challenges facing the program today.

Program Evolution

Utah, along with most of the states in this country, continues to experience critical shortages of special education personnel (Ludlow, 1998). These shortages are felt most keenly in rural school districts in the state. The five major institutions of higher education in Utah that provide teacher preparation in special education are located in the northern regions of the state where the state's population is clustered. Rural school districts have limited access to graduates from four of these programs and have even less success recruiting teachers from out of state. Travel distances, geographic conditions and winter weather combine to inhibit potential students from traveling to many of the state's preparation programs. These same conditions discourage institutions from providing field based preparation programs in rural school districts.

Early in the 1980's, in response to a request from a rural regional special education director, the Department of Special Education began exploring the possibility of delivering a program on site. The director had identified a pool of local teachers who were interested in becoming special educators. Faculty in the Department of Special Education worked with local special education directors and personnel from the Utah state Office of Education to design a program that could be delivered locally. Faculty drove to a central location (approximately 3 hours away from campus) to offer one certification course each term. Soon after the program was initiated, an interactive two-way television system was installed by the state in two rural regions. This system connected the University of Utah with these regions via a microwave broadcast link. During the Winter term of 1986 the first course was broadcast to the two rural regions. For the next several year's, the certification courses were broadcast to two rural sites. Live interactive broadcasts were also tape recorded and sent to regions that were not served by the television system.

With the use of the two-way interactive television, faculty no longer needed to drive long distances to meet with students. The technology allowed for other, more distant rural regions to participate in the certification program. It became evident that the program participants needed support at the local site, since direct access to faculty was limited. Local master special educators were identified in cooperation with district personnel to serve as on site support for program participants. These site facilitators worked with the teacher trainees during course sessions, and then supported the teachers as they implemented strategies in their classrooms. Local site facilitators provided the connection between the campus faculty and the local teacher trainees. Site facilitators helped to manage the program at the local site and ensure that teachers were able to implement newly learned instructional practices in the classroom.

As the program evolved four components provided a framework for the ongoing development. First, program participants were recruited from local rural school districts and prepared at the local site. Second, master special educators from rural communities were identified and trained to provide support and facilitation for the program. Third, available telecommunications technology was utilized to assist with the delivery of instruction and provide interaction with campus faculty as well as other rural students. And, finally two faculty lines, a distance education coordinator along with a practicum supervisor were designated within the department for the purpose of managing and supporting all program activities involved in delivering graduate teacher education at a distance (Sebastian, 1995).

Initially the program provided post-baccalaureate certification in special education only. In 1992, the Department of Special Education received approval to offer a Master of Education degree along with certification in two areas, Mild/Moderate and Severe disabilities. Since that time, the Distance Education Teacher Education program has been delivered to the four rural regions of the state. Within those regions, classes have been delivered to eight sites where cohorts of 8-12 students gather to participate in the program. In addition to two way television, the program utilizes computer communication technologies to provide additional opportunities for interaction among faculty and students.

Factors Impacting the Program

Recently, several internal and external factors have impacted the current distance teacher education program. These factors, or issues, suggest the need for changes in both the delivery and focus of the program. A description of the issues and their implications for the ongoing development of the distance teacher education program follows.

External factors. While there remains an ongoing need for rural special educators, the geographic demographics of this need have changed. In the past, cohorts of 6-10 individuals made up a distance site. Requests for assistance from rural school districts has tapered off to one or two individuals. Currently, only one region has a cohort of over 10 students. The three other rural regions have identified needs for one or two teachers. In talking with local special education directors, several factors have impacted this reduction in numbers. Two of the regions of the state are experiencing a population out migration due to economic factors locally and increased opportunity in urban regions. The other region has filled its need for special educators through the University of Utah's program, and at this time has only a few unfilled positions. Continuing to deliver a full program with multiple technologies and facilitated support is not a cost effective or an efficient delivery strategy for addressing this dispersed need for educators.

Internal factors. The shortage of qualified special educators has reached a critical level in the urban areas of the state of Utah (State Office Criticality Report). In response to this problem, the Department of Special Education at the University of Utah, previously only a graduate program, has created an undergraduate program to help address the shortages. An outcome of the new undergraduate program and ongoing recruitment efforts there has been an increase in students on campus, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Distance students previously viewed as an integral part of the department's program, are now seen as an "extra load" because of the increased numbers of campus students.

The distance education program requires additional time to work with rural students and prepare courses to be delivered via technology. Junior faculty members feel pressure to publish and earn tenure. Along with senior faculty, they believe that teaching distance education courses is time and labor intensive, robbing them of valuable writing time. As the distance program looks to infuse new technologies into its delivery (online and web enhanced options) the expectations on faculty time and expertise will no doubt increase.

Addressing the Challenges

In order to respond to the challenges presented by both the external and internal factors described above, the Department of Special Education has begun a series of focus group discussion involving multiple parties impacted by the distance education program. The goal of these discussions is to gather data to be used in the redesign of the current distance program. To assist in the discussions, program evaluation, demographic, and cost data have been compiled to develop a more complete picture of the issues and needs confronted by the distance program. A summary of the discussions held during the summer and fall of 2000 follows.

Summer focus group. During the Summer of 2000, three site facilitators and core faculty involved in the distance program met to discuss factors impacting the program. A trained facilitator external to the department conducted the focus group. Following a brief presentation of the history of the distance program, five sentence stems were used to direct the discussion. Using a consensus building strategy, brainstormed ideas were consolidated into agreed upon lists.

In terms of what an optimal preparation program for rural special education teachers should look like, 28 factors were identified. These included a listing of the kinds of knowledge and skills needed by rural special educators. Generally the list was congruent with the campus program competencies. In addition to those competencies the group identified the need for rural special educators to have a broad knowledge and skill base that addressed the wide range of diverse students often found in rural schools. Only four factors related to distance program delivery were identified. These included convenient delivery, regular feedback, adequate supervision, and the need to complete the program in a timely manner.

A sentence stem that asked participants to project the future of special education in rural Utah resulted in a list of 23 ideas. The group saw the need for well qualified teachers in rural areas continuing. Access to technology was identified as an issue as well. The need for educators to be prepared for diversity and an increasing range of student abilities was discussed in relation to changing service needs and more inclusive teaching environments. Accountability to multiple entities was also discussed.

When asked to identify the components of a high quality distance education program the group listed a total of 29 separate items. The following seven items appeared to have the most support: (1) support for students, (2) access to resources and faculty, (3) quality and relevant content, (4) effective and reliable technology, (5) flexibility, (6) preparation for all participants, and (7) personal contact. In terms of the kinds of distance delivery approaches that are used, distance facilitators favored the continued use of a variety of delivery approaches ranging from live on site in-person classes along with televised and online offerings. Site facilitators restated often the importance of direct faculty contact with students.

The fourth stem asked the group to address the current capacity of the department. Twenty-three responses were generated. These responses focused on the need to change, to be creative, to provide leadership and continuing support for rural districts. The need to conduct good evaluation and research, particularly as new technologies are implemented was discussed. The effort required was acknowledged as faculty expressed their concerns about overload, fatigue, the need to retool, and "endure" the changes that are coming.

The final prompt related to what we need to think about in the future. Ten items were generated. Issues discussed included a focus on continued collaboration with rural districts, evaluation of the program, supporting the quality of life for teachers in rural districts as well as for university faculty, and educating the public in terms of the need to attract and keep well-qualified special education personnel.

Overall all the discussion was very positive in terms of continuing the distance education program. There is still a need for teachers and providing access to quality preparation is vital to addressing that need. Infusing new technology applications into the current program was viewed as a positive step with the caution to not "throw out the baby with the bath water", in other words, we need to continue doing what works well.

Ongoing faculty discussions. During the Fall of 2000 the faculty met to continue the dialogue around needed changes in the distance program. The discussion began with a review of multiple data sources including, the number of students involved in the program over the past five years, faculty involved in the teaching of both live televised and pre-recorded class, technology, facilitator, and program support costs, and tuition generated by the program.

An analysis of the data sources verified that the program is not "cost effective" when comparing fiscal output (costs to operate program) with revenues that have been generated. The actual costs to the department are minimal since the program is heavily supported with externally funded federal and state grants. Since the original purpose of the distance education program was to provide a service to the rural school districts, generating resources beyond the costs can be viewed as a benefit.

The quality of the program was discussed. Early on in the development of the distance education program the faculty was concerned about offering a high quality program that compared favorably with the department's campus based program. Quality at that time was defined in two ways. First, distance students must meet the same admissions criteria as campus students in order to participate in the program. Second, the programs offered at a distance must be "congruent" with the campus coursework in terms of expectations and competencies met. In order to ensure that the quality is essentially the same, campus faculty either teach their courses live over two way television, or the courses are video taped live and then sent to the distance sites. All assignments for the courses and for the program are identical for both on and off-campus students. What differs between the campus and distance program is how the courses are delivered using technology.

Several issues in relation to the distance program were identified. Issues in relation to the technology included costs, the reliability of the technology, faculty costs in terms of time, effort and compensation, the need to stay current with new technologies, and the ongoing need to update content of pre-recorded classes. Questions were raised related to continuing the program given the following issues: (1) small numbers of students located in dispersed sites around the state, and (2) faculty concerns related to the time it takes to grade papers, the increased number of campus students, and the need to learn how to use new technologies (on line and web enhanced). Faculty recognized the need to continue to support the program particularly in relation to the teacher shortages and the need for rural teachers to access a quality preparation program. Questions of how the program fits into the department's mission were also discussed.

Decisions and Future Directions

The Department of Special Education is at a crossroads in terms of its Distance Teacher Education program. The program has served as a model program nationally and is the "oldest" special education distance program in the country (Ludlow & Brannan, 1999). But at this time, the program is in need of updating. Newer and more innovative approaches to delivering course content in special education are being implemented across the country. Additionally, questions about the need for the program have been raised, particularly in terms of the changing demographics in rural districts in Utah. Discussions about departmental priorities bring into question the research vs. service dilemma. And finally, there is a question of program costs in terms of both dollars and faculty time and effort.

Options that are currently on the table include; (1) discontinuing the program, (2) continuing the program as it is currently configured, or (3) updating the program by infusing new technologies and approaches into the delivery. One of the very real strengths of the distance program at the University of Utah is the role of faculty in its development and delivery. The Distance Education Program has never been a "one-man" show. Ultimately, the faculty will make the final decision as to the future of the program. The department has a long history of service to rural districts and has over the years exhibited a willingness to explore innovative technologies. In the best of all circumstances we will move into the new century by expanding our expertise in distance education and integrating the use of new technologies with the knowledge we have gained in the past 16 years.

References

Ludlow, B. L. (1998). Preparing special education personnel for rural schools: Current practices and future directions. Journal of Research in Rural Education, 14, No. 2, 57-75.

Ludlow, B.L. & Brannon, S.A. (1999). Distance education programs preparing personnel for rural areas: Current practices, emerging trends, and future directions. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 18, ¾, 5-20.

Sebastian, J. P. (1995). Distance teacher education at the University of Utah: An evolving model. In P. F. Galvin & B. L. Johnson, Jr. (Eds.) Educational issues in Utah Governance, legislative, technology and finance (33-45). Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Education Policy Center, The Graduate School of Education, University of Utah.

Lisa R. Churchill, Ph.D.
California State University, Chico
Special Education Programs
First and Normal Streets
Chico, CA 95929-0465

Mary C. Jensen, Ph.D.
California State University, Chico
Special Education Programs
First and Normal Streets
Chico, CA 95929-0465

Michelle Cepello, Ed.D.
California State University, Chico
Special Education Programs
First and Normal Streets
Chico, CA 95929-0465

FINDING AND KEEPING THE BEST: A RURAL REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Perspective And Framework

"Finding and Keeping the Best," an on-the-job teacher preparation program, is designed and administered by a partnership of California State University, Chico (CSU, Chico) and 47 school districts in 14 Northeastern California counties spanning 40,000 square miles. In this model, collaborative structure was originally defined as the sharing of responsibility and fiscal and personal resources in order to recruit, select, educate, support, and certify the professional special education teacher. The collaboration within this rural partnership program is an outgrowth of the university's long-standing and active Special Education Advisory Board, a group representing each county office and major school district, and including a cross-section of professional roles, community and parent representatives, and university faculty. Several years ago, after examining the personnel needs of the region and multiple alternatives proposed by the university, the Board approved the design of a two-year training program for special education interns. At the same time, members formed a regional partnership to improve the quality of education in the region, to alleviate its severe shortage of qualified special educators, and to reduce teachers' professional isolation.

The resulting collaborative inter-institutional structure requires each of the partners to make fiscal contributions to the program. The university provides televised or web-based courses, regional supervision, and separate course sections for interns. The public schools guarantee interns ten paid release days annually to attend classes. Partial tuition stipends, mentors' or support providers' services, and program coordination and evaluation are supported through grants from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

In any long-term collaboration, the energy and spirit of equity that initiated the venture must be sustained. The Advisory Board meets at least semi-annually to maintain oversight of the project. In addition, a continuous pattern of communication ensures that the university and each of the 47 Local Education Agencies share equally in decisions governing each individual intern's recruitment, selection, support and competency verification. Research in school improvement, teacher preparation, and staff development commonly points to the importance of such collaboration: the greater the degree of cohesion and collaborative structures, the greater the possibilities for school improvement and excellence in teacher education (Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, & Yamauchi, 2000). A participating public school administrator testifies to the replicability of this program: "If it can work here, it can work anywhere."

Program Features

This partnership program for the preparation of special education teachers is distinct from traditional programs in the following five ways:

1. Inter-institutional processes: The university and employing school district work across historical organizational boundaries, sharing equally in decisions governing each intern's recruitment, admission, support, and certification.

2. Cohort formation: Program activities include both informal socialization time and structured interactions designed to facilitate group cohesion and support. In late summer, prior to beginning their new jobs, interns attend pre-service survival training that addresses their immediate needs. The pre-service session, fondly termed "Boot Camp," includes formal instruction in Special Education "Survival Pedagogy" such as: Individual Educational Programs (IEPs), roles of the special education specialist, daily schedules, introductory classroom and behavioral management, key elements of laws governing special education, and collaboration with professionals and parents. A critical aspect of the pre-service experience is the formation of a supportive intern cadre or cohort. Interns begin to form the professional peer relationships that will sustain their energies through their intensive program.

3. Accessible and relevant information: The schedule and structure of the partnership program is also unique. Learning experiences are individually tailored, accessible, and highly relevant to interns' classroom contexts. Following their pre-service experience, interns enroll in a two-year program. Special education faculty teach interns in remote, rural sites through weekly evening courses offered on the university's interactive online web-based distance education system. Faculty also meet with the intern cadre for a full-day class each month. The current needs of interns in their schools determine the sequence of course material. Since new interns need and want to know everything at once, university faculty find they must be constantly ready to address an unpredictable variety of issues, ranging from behavioral management to collaboration and diagnosis and instruction. Theory and research are rapidly translated to practice.

Throughout the partnership program, the scope of academic content and the expectations for competency attainment are maintained at the same level of quality as found in the university's traditional special education programs. A longitudinal study comparing graduates of the partnership and graduates of the traditional program verified the equivalent high quality of both programs in producing effective teachers. (Churchill & Jensen, 1999).

4. Electronic network connection: provides regional outreach and improves communications by linking intern teachers with other cohort teachers, university course instructors, field supervisors, local support providers (teachers and administrators), and university staff (Credential's Office and project managers).

5. Intern teacher support is specifically designed to increase teacher competence and confidence and reduce professional isolation. The regional partners, consisting of university faculty, school administrators, and trained mentor teachers, form a "safety net" around each intern teacher. Influenced by Tharp and Gallimore's (1991) "Triadic Model of Assisted Performance," mentors routinely interact with university faculty and co-participate in reflective activities with interns.

Program partners are acutely aware of the challenges facing special education intern teachers: they are learners (similar to student teachers) on the job, yet they simultaneously perform as teachers (beginning teachers), whose learning may be perceived as secondary to their work within their local school sites. District and university staff provide joint support and supervision beginning during pre-service and extending throughout the two-year program. A local, fully credentialed special education teacher is selected by the public schools and trained by the university to function as a mentor or support provider to each trainee. Influenced by the framework found in Tharp and Gallimore's (1991) "Triadic Model of Assisted Performance," the university and local school district administrator help the mentor teacher to assist the intern effectively.

In a recent program improvement, three regional mentor leaders have been selected as Distinguished Teachers in Residence from the local schools. They serve each region of the partnership by facilitating the support network in each separate county, conducting regional focus groups, directly assisting interns in their classrooms, and collaborating with administrators and mentors. It is believed that in this model, each intern will receive increased personal and professional support, and that consistency across the region will be improved.

There is a strong theoretical base for this augmentation. The research of McIntyre and Hagger (1996) suggests that both support and rigor are required if the mentoring process is to promote professional development. Their findings are based on data from six research teams at Oxford University, Manchester, Metropolitan University, Keele, Sussex, Swansea and Leicester Universities. Field's (1994) discussion of the teacher-mentor also emphasizes that mentoring should go beyond support to facilitate professional growth: "There is a distinction," he states (p. 67), "between social support that puts newcomers at ease and professional support that advances knowledge and practice." Our interns clearly need both forms of support.

Program Evaluation Findings:

Longitudinal analyses from our extensive Special Education Graduate Outcomes Study conducted 1994 through 2000 indicated a pattern of program improvement attributable to the evolving collaborative partnership structure. Perceptions of the competency of graduates of the partnership's preparation program were compared to perceptions of the competency of graduates of the traditional teacher preparation programs. Measures included graduates' self-reports, employers' ratings, and university supervisors' ratings. Because data were collected from graduates, their school site administrators, and their former field supervisors, the merit of the partnership program structure could be assessed from the multiple perspectives of stakeholders and program consumers. Analysis between each consecutive year of program implementation indicated a significant increase in graduates' ability to teach and work with pupils, parents, and other teachers. Graduates of the partnership program identified as major program benefits: Relations with peers; Acquisition of knowledge; Sense of professionalism; Accessibility to professional certification; Program's structural elements and accessibility.

School Administrators reported that the partnership program, in contrast to a traditional program: Improved the quality of educators for their local classrooms; Provided a structure that reduced the personal, professional, and geographical hardships of obtaining certification; Established a support structure that both assists beginning teachers and encouraged the retention of experienced teachers; Improved educational services to students, their schools, and their families; Fostered a desire for continuous professional growth for program participants; Identified alternative program graduates as leaders and mentors in their schools, who bring current information and resources to the local educational programs; and Improved "connections" between the public schools and the university.

The cycle of curriculum development, instructional planning, delivery of field supervision, and corresponding evaluation activities is continuous. Evaluation findings indicate that redesigned preparation curriculum ***improves*** the rural special education profession. Program course content is now aligned to the new California State Education Specialist Program Standards that address the direct services (i.e.: instruction, classroom management, curriculum modifications, assessment) as well as indirect services (i.e.: collaboration/consultation with general education teachers and related agencies, IEP case management and scheduling) performed by special educators.

Evaluation data have also revealed a major partnership challenge: The issue of *"challenging working conditions"* is one not easily solved in the region. The project has had some influence on working conditions for interns through the newly revised Individualized Induction Plan (IIP) that spells out responsibilities for each intern and through contractual agreements against assignment overloads. Nonetheless, special education interns frequently face classroom assignments that would challenge veteran educators. We believe that the reality of the special education profession, perhaps particularly in remote rural settings, is that teachers deal each day with pupils who have very severe learning and emotional difficulties and mainstreaming settings that do not always meet pupil needs. Our public school partners find it difficult and often impossible to predict the intensity of classroom assignments since their schools must serve each child who enters special education. Public school programs for the Emotionally Disturbed (ED) experience the most severe turnover in both intern and credentialed teacher employment within the rural region. Our project will continue to work with administrators, to hire instructors/regional support mentors especially skilled in the ED populations, and to conduct a formal review of the situation through the partnership represented by the Special Education Advisory Board.

Evaluation data indicates a major partnership program success. Graduate retention rates exceed state and national levels for rural special educators. Ten years after the initiation of the Partnership, 95% of program graduates are currently employed by local school districts that participated in and contributed to the partnership.

This clear pattern of graduate retention not only reduces the shortage of fully qualified educators in the region, but also demonstrates to each of the partners the cost-effectiveness of investing resources in the education and development of its future teachers.

Significant Lessons Learned

In a recent chapter submitted by Michael D. McKibbin for the 2001 Association of Teacher Educator's (ATE) Yearbook on Alternative Certification, authors Churchill and Jensen (in press) shared a significant lesson learned from "growing" a regional partnership for rural special education. In their section that describes the Northeastern California Partnership for Special Education is a quotation from Rob Lehman, President Emeritus of the Fetzer Institute (1998):

> "Collaboration, on the surface, is about bringing together resources, both financial and intellectual, to work toward a common purpose. But true collaboration has an 'inside,' a deeper, more radical meaning. The inner life of collaboration is about states of mind and spirit that are open - open to self-examination, open to growth, open to trust, and open to mutual action. Collaborative relationships that arise from such radical openness become vehicles of co-creation. And human collaboration that draws upon the resources of mind and money, but not on the resources of grace, will only rearrange the furniture."

Churchill and Jensen (in press) concluded that perhaps the most significant lesson learned in the rural partnership was the importance of building and maintaining personal "relationships" over time across the vast region. They believe that these relationships provide the key to a successful partnership program. The authors state," This collaborative partnership process is extremely time consuming and neither *immediately* gratifying nor time or cost-effective; our longitudinal program evaluation data indicate that important program benefits are realized only over time. Specific lessons learned include: the importance of our daily activities and interactions that will have long term effects; the need for continuous, open, bi-directional communications with all partners, both verbally and also in the written form; and the need for patience and understanding from external funding sources and legislators, recognizing that it will take 3 to 5 years before a collaborative partnership alternative certification program will result in long-term professional changes for teachers."

In sum, *Finding and Keeping the Best, A Rural Regional Partnership* is not only viewed as an immediate response to the shortage of special education teachers, but also as a systemic means to reduce the professional isolation of special educators and to improve the special education teaching profession in our rural region. As stated by Churchill and Jensen (in press)," The Partnership began with a vision for individual and professional changes that could only be accomplished by sharing resources of mind and money. It is only over time and drawing also upon the "resources of grace," that we have begun to realize this vision."

References

Churchill, L.R. & Jensen, M.C. (1999). Comparative outcomes of traditional and collaborative teacher preparation programs: How important are the differences in structure and support? (Technical Report No.3). Chico, California: California State University, Special Education Program.

Field, B. (1994). The new role of the teacher -mentor, in B. Field and T. Field (Eds.), Teachers as mentors: A practical guide (pp.63-77). London, England: Falmer Press.

Lehman, R. (1998). The heart of philanthropy. Speech presented at Council on Foundations Twelfth Family Foundations Conference. Kalamazoo, MI.

McIntyre, D. & Hagger, H. (1996). Mentors in schools: Developing the profession of teaching. London, England: David Fulton Publishers.

Tharp, R.G., Estrada, P., Dalton, S.S., & Yamauchi, L.A. (2000). Teaching transformed: Achieving excellence, fairness, inclusion, and harmony. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Tharp, R. G. & Gallimore, R. (1991). Rousing minds to life: Teaching, learning, and schooling in social context. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Katherine Mitchem, Ph.D.
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506

Ann Richards, Ph.D.
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV 26506

Deborah Wells, Ed.D.
Morgantown, WV 26508

IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT IN RURAL SCHOOLS

Despite a significant knowledge base about research-proven practices that facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities, few of these practices are implemented systematically in classrooms (Malouf & Schiller, 1995). This area is particularly challenging with regard to students who display troubling behavior. One practice that has produced dramatic improvements in problem behavior of the most challenging students is the use of positive behavior supports (PBS) based on functional behavioral assessment (FBA) (Gable, 1999). This approach is characterized as a long-term strategy to reduce inappropriate behavior, teach more appropriate behavior, and provide contextual supports necessary for successful outcomes. The recently enacted Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 require the IEP team to consider positive behavioral strategies for students with disabilities if the student has behavior problems that impede his learning or the learning of others. In addition, states are required to address the in-service needs and pre-service preparation of personnel to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to implement this approach.

In this paper, we first describe FBA and PBS and the skills practitioners must have to be able to implement this approach effectively. We discuss how challenges specific to rural communities may exacerbate the difficulties facing many schools across the nation in ensuring that teachers are willing and able to apply this approach. To set the context for this paper we briefly describe the types of training available to practitioners in West Virginia and parts of rural Maryland and report anecdotal data on the implementation of FBA and PBS. We then summarize the sustained use literature and how this literature might inform professional development that addresses and accommodates those needs specific to rural communities. In particular, we examine which training and training models may be effective at achieving successful implementation of PBS and FBA by practitioners. Next, we describe how this review of the literature prompted the modification and development of an instrument to facilitate systematic investigation of those variables related to sustained use. Finally, we discuss implications for training, practice, and research.

PBS based on FBA has been widely validated in clinical settings and with low-incidence populations in applied settings; however, some experts in the field have questioned the validity of the process for students with high incidence disabilities in school settings (Nelson, Roberts, Mather, & Rutherford, 1999) and even the ability and desire of public school educators to engage in such a process (Scott & Nelson, 1999). The legal mandate to consider PBS for all students with disabilities requires states to address the in-service needs and pre-service preparation of personnel to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of their students with disabilities. This includes enhancing their abilities to use strategies such as behavioral interventions and supports. Scott and Nelson (1999) indicated that competence in FBA requires training in applied behavior analysis and behavioral assessment as well as an understanding of functional intervention procedures. Such training is not common in the backgrounds of most teachers and so, for the most part, state departments of education, school districts, and schools have looked to continuing professional development opportunities to provide practitioners the skills necessary to implement this approach.

Challenges Faced by Rural Districts

Rural school districts face stifling roadblocks when attempting to implement strategic changes such as inclusive education for students with disabilities and behavior problems. These roadblocks include a limited tax base for needed revenues, a need to deliver services over a wide geographic area, inadequate facilities, a shortage of related service providers, and high transportation costs. Staff development for educators in many rural communities is very limited because the sources of expertise for training are located at great distances from the communities in which they teach (Knapczyk, Rodes, & Brush, 1994). Limited accessibility to training in these communities makes it difficult for teachers to update their professional skills as well as to receive the necessary training to carry out their responsibilities. A number of teachers in certain specialties are unqualified or underqualified (Ludlow, 1998). In West Virginia, for example, approximately 25% of those teachers working with students with behavioral disorders are working on permit; that is, they are required to obtain 6 semester hours of coursework per year to maintain their permit to teach in an area for which they have no teaching certificate. Compounding this difficulty is a situation that arises in smaller rural communities where one person may wear many hats in terms of responsibilities. Thus, the person responsible for conducting FBAs and developing behavior intervention plans may have neither the skill nor the time to dedicate to this role or task.

Staff development in rural schools typically takes one of two forms: the school district invites an expert to deliver a short in-service workshop or educators take courses at colleges or universities that are distant from the community. In both situations geographical distance limits the extent and intensity of support and assistance provided to practitioners after the initial training. Thus, follow-up when teachers are trying to apply new concepts and skills in their classrooms is often non-existent. In order to overcome such obstacles to effective professional development, rural schools must identify ways to develop expertise and support for new approaches from within their staff. It is likely that these additional challenges facing rural schools will impact both how professional development in PBS based on FBA is delivered to rural communities and the extent to which practitioners perceive themselves willing and able to implement this approach after receiving training.

Training in FBA and PBS

In West Virginia, the state office of education called together a task force that developed the Teacher Interventions and Positive Supports (TIPS) training (Clarke, September 15,1999, personal communication). Participants from each school district attended 3 days of "train the trainer" training in IDEA discipline issues, FBA, behavior intervention planning, and social skills training returning to their school districts with all materials required to train practitioners in their school districts. Despite these efforts by West Virginia Department of Education Office of Special Education and the fact that all but two counties have participated in TIPS training, an informal survey of 40 teachers of students with behavior disorders indicated the following: Less than 23% of those teachers reported that they had received any training in FBA (Reed & Mitchem, 2001). This is particularly disheartening when one considers that most school districts report that the BD teacher is involved in or responsible for conducting FBAs needed.

We have been working with four schools, three elementary schools in Maryland and one K-8 school in West Virginia. Faculty at the K-8 school in West Virginia received TIPS training. At the elementary schools in western Maryland faculty participated in a one-week intensive course offered through the Lifequilters project at the University Affiliated Center for Developmental Disabilities. Both TIPS and Lifequilters training described FBA and PBS, when it should be implemented, what the process involved, the steps for implementing FBA, developing interventions, and evaluating progress. Training materials in each case were based on O'Neill and colleagues Functional assessment: A practical handbook (1997) and other sources. Both methods provided participants the opportunity to gain a conceptual understanding of the approach as well as practical experience in conducting FBA and PBS using case studies. Training differed in the duration (3 vs. 5 days) and the extent to which technical assistance was provided. For example, trainers from the Lifequilters project provided school-based training to an 8-10 member PBS team and then guided them through their first FBA and behavior intervention plan with a focus child from the school.

Regardless of which type of training schools received, practitioners at all four schools have indicated difficulty implementing FBA and, in particular, developing behavior intervention plans that are based on functional assessment data (Mitchem, 2000). Specific concerns related by practitioners included: insufficient time, difficulty using the behavior recording form, the seemingly inappropriate and repetitive nature of questions on the functional assessment interview (FAI), and most significantly, not knowing what to do with all the data once collected. Training participants expressed pride in the artistic MAPS (Making Action Plans, see Malatchi, 1997) that the team had created for each focus child but noted that they had in most cases been unable to identify functions of the problem behaviors and were unsure how to proceed. A primary concern of participants centered on when in the process they could remove the child from the classroom or school.

Sustained Use Literature

A continuing challenge in education is to improve the translation and use of research findings for educators, policy makers, and other stakeholders (Carnine, 1997; Gersten & Brengelmann, 1996). Research on this issue suggests that research findings seldom find their way into classroom practice and are implemented poorly even when they do (Cuban, 1990). Even less frequently do innovative best practices become institutionalized (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998; Fullan, 1991; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1998). Sustained use of research-proven practices occurs only sporadically even with wide dissemination, training, and support (Carnine, 1997; Fullan, 1991; Gersten & Brengelman, 1996; Malouf & Schiller, 1995, Vaughn, Klingner, & Hughes, 2000). In light of this pervasive and widespread challenge in education, we should anticipate teachers' reluctance to implement PBS and consider the implications of this when developing and delivering training in PBS and FBA.

Highlighting this issue, Scott and Nelson (1999) question whether FBA will be an accepted practice in the classroom, regardless of its merits and point out that interventions "typically used by educators to deal with challenging student behaviors... tend to be unsystematic, negative, or both (Gunter, Denny, Jack, Shores, & Nelson, 1993; Shores, Jack, Gunter, Ellis, DeBriere, & Wehby, 1994)." (Scott & Nelson, 1999, p. 249). Persuading teachers to design interventions that focus on teaching appropriate replacement behavior in place of the more typical negative and exclusionary contingencies will be difficult even with ongoing consultation and support. The challenge then is to identify how to ensure that training in FBA and PBS leads to implementation by practitioners.

Effective Professional Development

The components of effective professional development are well-researched (e.g., Joyce & Showers, 1988). Consistent with the literature, teachers should demonstrate both conceptual understanding of the innovation and its benefits to students and themselves as well as frequent opportunities to practice skills learned to mastery. As noted by Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000) professional development should be relevant and research-based, with opportunities for active learning, as well as being of sufficient intensity and duration to support teacher change. Effective professional development provides practitioners with the knowledge, skills, and conceptual understanding necessary to implement an innovation. The problem for small rural schools is delivering such professional development activities in a way that overcomes cost and distance barriers, provides opportunities for collegiality for teachers with similar needs and interests, makes follow-up support available, and provides significant experiential training (Storer & Crosswait, 1995).

Mitchem and Young (in press) have suggested examining not only the acceptability and feasibility of an intervention, in this case PBS and FBA, but also our efforts to facilitate teachers' adoption of the intervention. We need to investigate not only how to address students' problem behavior using PBS but also how to facilitate and support educators' implementation of this approach. Additional questions to consider include the extent to which we make the practice environment more conducive to change and the systems we establish to reinforce such change. For example, teachers often intervene simply to stop inappropriate behaviors. We may need to help teachers understand that providing a challenging student PBS may lead to the presence of more appropriate behaviors. Accomplishing this may help to reinforce the teachers' use of these supports. Vadasy and colleagues (1997) also found that teacher interest in trying out new practices is related to perceived principal and peer supports as well as to teachers' perceptions that the proposed intervention addresses a gap in their programs. Additional efforts, therefore, to involve administrators in training, to train teams of teachers, and to help teachers document positive effects of PBS on classroom behavior may be fruitful.

It appears that training is not the only major factor affecting the successful introduction of an innovation such as PBS and FBA. Both understanding and perceptions of all stakeholders are key factors to consider when attempting to introduce and promote adoption of an innovation. Although adoption and sustained use of PBS and FBA are the focus of this paper, we are interested in the broader question of how to promote practitioners' adoption and sustained use of research-proven practices in general. Researchers in the medical field have identified similar concerns regarding best practice implementation. In an attempt to elucidate salient features of interventions that improve professional practice, medical researchers have formed the Cochrane Effective Practice and Organization of

Care Group. This group prepares and keeps up to date reviews of interventions to improve professional practice using a comprehensive data collection checklist that permits evaluation of a number of potentially salient factors (Cochrane Collaboration, 1999). Use of this index in the medical field has produced a consolidated data-base to identify research-proven practices.

Based on our review of the literature, the Cochrane index, and consistent with the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) (2000) recommendations, we hypothesize that the factors influencing sustained use of research-based practices in schools may be conceptualized and evaluated along four broad dimensions: (a) characteristics of the context (including characteristics of the participants, school and community, professional and regulatory bodies); (b) content (the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed or nature of the innovation); (c) the process (the way knowledge, skills, and attitudes are acquired or nature of the professional development and supports); and (d) nature of the outcomes (including teacher understanding of the innovation and mastery of the professional development objectives). We believe that features within these dimensions interact to influence the impact or degree of sustained use of the innovation (Mitchem & Wells, 2000). Developing an educational equivalent to the Cochrane Index might provide researchers with an instrument to synthesize the results of current and past investigations of sustained use of innovations. It is conceivable that such a data base could be used to develop decisions rules to guide selection of appropriate professional development activities, contextual supports, and incentives to inform practitioners of these practices.

Implications for Training, Practice, and Research

As this educational equivalent to the Cochrane Index is evolving, so too is our training model. We agree with Gersten, Chard, and Baker's (2000) recommendations for training to ensure sustainability. They recommend that training include: a plan to promote sustainability, realistic expectations, opportunities for teachers to understand and think through an approach, systems to enhance teacher efficacy such as peer networks and support, sufficient administrative support, and explicit links between change and student data. Thus, our training involves an initial whole faculty staff development session in which an overview of FBA and PBS is provided including a description of its components and a rationale for its use. At this meeting, we ask for volunteers, including an administrator, who are willing to attend further training to become part of the school's "behavior solutions team." This smaller group commits to an additional two days of training followed by biweekly meetings where they meet to discuss behavior problems, identify who needs to collect what data, and generate hypothesis statements, strategies and supports, and provide ongoing updates on focus students. At the biweekly solutions team meetings we have tried to provide coaching and support for teachers developing strategies and supports rather than providing solutions themselves. Although we facilitated the first behavior solutions team meeting, that responsibility has now shifted to faculty members at the school. Over the course of the school year we plan to reduce the intensity of our involvement to monthly face-to-face meetings, then to email support with face-to-face meetings only quarterly. Finally, at monthly faculty meetings the behavior solutions team shares data on office referrals, suspensions, and student/teacher successes.

Conclusion

Even when information regarding best practice methods is widely disseminated and empirically validated approaches are available and mandated, educators appear reluctant to use them. In this paper, we described FBA and PBS and the skills and competencies needed by practitioners to implement this approach. We summarized the challenges faced by rural school districts in ensuring that their faculty and staff receive appropriate training in this approach. Examples from our experiences with four schools in rural Maryland and West Virginia are provided as illustrations. An emerging model based on a review of effective professional development practices and the sustained use literature is presented to assist staff developers and administrators in delivering training in FBA and PBS (Mitchem & Wells, 2000). This model of professional development was designed to help build capacity within the school building, demystify and streamline the FBA and PBS approach, and to address and accommodate rural school needs.

References

Birman, B., Desimone, L., Porter, A., & Garet, M. (2000). Designing professional development that works. Educational Leadership, 57(8), 28-33.

Carnine, D. (1997). Bridging the research-to-practice gap. Exceptional Children, 63, 513-521.

Cochrane Collaboration. (1999). Cochrane effective practice and organization of care group: Report of activities, July 1994-April 1999 [On-line]. http://www.abdn.ac.uk/public_health/hsru/epoc/epocse.htm

Cuban, L. (1990). Reforming again, again, and again. Educational Researcher, 19(1), 3-13.

Cuban, L. (1996). Myths about changing schools and the case of special education. Remedial and Special Education, 17(2), 75-82.

Fuchs, D. & Fuchs, L.S. (1998). Building a bridge across the canyon. Learning Disability Quarterly, 21, 99-101.

Fullan, M.G., with Stiegelbauer, S. (1991). The new meaning of educational change. New York: Teachers College Record.

Gable, R.A. (1999). Functional assessment in school settings. Behavioral Disorders, 24, 246-248.

Gersten, R., & Brengelman, S. U. (1996). The quest to translate research into classroom practice: The emerging knowledge base. Remedial and Special Education, 17(2), 67-74.

Gersten, R., Chard, D., & Baker, S. (2000). Factors enhancing sustained use of research-based instructional practices. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 33(5), 445-457.

Gunter, P.L., Denny, R.K., Jack, S.L., Shores, R.E., & Nelson, C.M. (1993). Aversive stimuli in academic interactions between students with serious emotional disturbance and their teachers. Behavioral Disorders, 18, 265-274.

Joyce, B. R., & Showers, B. (1988). Student achievement through staff development. New York: Longman.

Knapczyk, D., Rodes, P., & Brush, T. (1994). Improving staff development in rural communities using distance education and communication technology. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 13(2), 19-24.

Ludlow, B.L. (1998). Rural personnel preparation. Journal of Research in Rural Education, 14(2), 57-75.

Malatchi, A. (1997). "Whose life is it anyway?" A look at person-centered planning, our educational system, and tools for change. The Positive Behavior Support Newsletter, 1(3), 4-6.

Malouf, D.B. & Schiller, E.P. (1995). Practice and research in special education. Exceptional Children, 61, 414-424.

Mastropieri, M., & Scruggs, T.E. (1998). Constructing more meaningful relationships in the classroom: Mnemonic research into practice. Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 13(3), 138-145.

Mitchem, K.J., & Wells, D. (2000, November). When does training in functional behavioral assessment lead to implementation? A prescription for institutionalizing best practice. Paper presented at the 24th Annual Conference on Severe Behavior Disorders of Children and Youth, Scottsdale, AZ.

Mitchem, K.J., & Young, K.R. (in press). Adapting self-management for classwide use: Acceptability, feasibility, and effectiveness. Remedial and Special Education.

National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. (2000). Professional development for teachers. [On-line]. http:/www.ldonline.org/njcld/prof_devel.html

Nelson, J.R., Roberts, M.L., Mathur, S., & Rutherford, R.B. (1999). Has public policy exceeded our knowledge base? A review of the functional behavioral assessment literature. Behavioral Disorders, 24, 169-180.

O'Neill, R.E., Horner, R.H., Albin, R.W., Sprague, J.R., Storey, K., & Newton, J.S. (1997). Functional assessment and program development for problem behavior: A practical handbook (2nd ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Reed, M., & Mitchem, K.J. (2001). Training in Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Behavior Supports—survey. (Unpublished raw data).

Scott, T.M. , & Nelson, C.M. (1999). Functional behavioral assessment: Implications for training and staff development. Behavioral Disorders, 24, 249-252.

Shores, R.E., Jack, S.L., Gunter, P.L., DeBriere, T.J., & Wehby, J.H. (1994). Classroom interactions of children with behavior disorders. Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 1(1), 27-39.

Storer, J.H., & Crosswait, D.J. (1995). Delivering staff development to the small rural school. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 14(3), 23-30.

Vadasy, P.F., Jenkins, J.R., Antil, L.R., Phillips, N.B., & Pool, K. (1997). The research-to-practice ball game: Classwide peer tutoring and teacher interest, implementation, and modifications. Remedial and Special Education, 18(3), 143-156.

Vaughn, S., Klingner, J., & Hughes, M. (2000). Sustainability of research-based practices. Exceptional Children, 66, 163-171.

Billie L. Friedland, Ed. D.
Special Education Department
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, IL 61920

Lynn Walz, M. S.
Special Education Department
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, IL 61920

PRE-TEACHERS EVALUATE UNIVERSITY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS FOR CURRICULUM ADAPTATION AND ACCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN RURAL CLASSROOMS

Due to availability of fewer supports and resources (Martin and Williams, 2000), expansive travel distances, and limited time to develop individualized materials, rural educators find consultation, collaboration and networking essential both to the preparation of future teachers and to successful instruction of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms and settings (Ludlow and Wienke, 1998). University-School partnerships can provide classroom teachers with the support they need to individualize curriculum access and make necessary adaptations (Deschenes, Ebeling, & Sprague, 1996). This qualitative, action research study (Creswell, 1998) assessed preteachers' perceptions about the quality of their participation in practica experiences collaboratively developed and supervised by university and school personnel in rural service areas. With input from area teachers, university supervisors designed a qualitative, action research inquiry into the reflections and perceptions of preteachers. The protocol comprised four primary questions designed to elicit critical student feedback, which was then analyzed, integrated into course evaluation, and considered for changes in course structure and delivery. Preteachers' written narrative responses were collected over three semesters, Fall 1999, Spring 2000, through Fall 2000. Their oral responses during large group discussions were manually recorded and analyzed for Fall, 1999 and Fall, 2000.

Background

The percentage of children with disabilities attending regular education classes has increased every year since the passage of The Education for All Handicapped Children (PL 94-142) in 1975, and by all indicators, this trend will continue. Approximately 80% of children with disabilities are attending regular education classes all or part of their programming day (USDE, 1997). Students with learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities in particular bring to the educational setting a number of general and specific learning needs such as difficulties in processing information, conceptualizing, and remembering that can lead to significant academic deficits (Deschler et Al., 1982). Schumm and Vaughn (1992) confirmed that teachers were expressing discomfort and lack of confidence to meet these types of educational needs in regular classroom settings. For these reasons, providing consultative support to classroom teachers in the process of assessing multiple learning needs and adapting curriculum and materials is of benefit at all levels, to the school students, practicing teachers, and preteachers.

Teacher Preparation Course Structure: Consultation and Curriculum Adaptation for Individuals with Special Needs

Participants in this study were enrolled in a Consultation and Curriculum Adaptation Course. The course provides practica experiences and lecture sessions designed to develop preteachers' consultative, planning, and creative skills necessary for implementing modified curricula for students with special needs. This course includes 30 hours of practica. The 30 hours for practica can be divided between shadowing a practicing, consulting teacher (maximum of 10 hours), and consulting directly with teachers to discuss learning needs of specific students and creating materials that modify curriculum or assist students to access curriculum. Their consulting teachers and university supervisors evaluate performance of participants at the end of each semester using an evaluative checklist. These performance outcomes aligned with NCATE performance standards.

Preteachers also meet weekly for lecture sessions and in-class activities. The lecture portion of the course is comprised of five unit: 1) Educator as Creator of Effective Education Environments, (2) Knowledge of Diversity Among Students, (3) Knowledge of Diverse Societies and Communities, (4) Knowledge of Diverse Subject Areas and Levels, and (5) Knowledge of Diverse Strategies. Course topics include Preparing to Consult; Teaming for Problem Identification; Observation and Informal Assessment; Consultation Principles, Strategies, and Techniques; Consultation and Curriculum Adaptation. Course. Textbooks used in the course are by Friend & Cook, (1996) and Hover & Patton (1997).

Methods

Participants

Participants were 90 pre-service teachers enrolled full-time in a special education teacher preparation program at a small, mid-western university. During Fall 1999, 24 preteachers participated, one of whom was male and 23 were female. During Spring 2000, 33 preteachers participated, three of whom were male and 30 female. During Fall 2000, 33 preteachers participated, two of whom were male and 31were female. For each semester there were several students enrolled in the course who did not participate in the evaluation because of absence from that particular class session.

Setting

University supervisors collaborated to set up a debriefing session for preteachers at the culmination of their practica. During this session, they were afforded time to provide written narrative responses before participation in a round table discussion to share their ideas orally. These sessions occurred in the lecture classrooms, which were familiar to preteachers from lecture class meetings. The sessions took place in the late afternoon. Participating preteachers were informed of the importance and usefulness of their feedback to course design. In addition, they were that told all information gathered would remain anonymous, but that the ideas generated may be reported at local, state, and national levels.

Data Collection

Data were collected in the form of written responses to four questions followed by a large group discussion. These activities were facilitated by one university supervisor at the end of each semester, (Fall, 1999, Spring 2000, and Fall, 2000) after practica and course requirements were completed. Students were given the opportunity to write their personal responses then enter into large group discussion of the same four questions. Questions that were asked of participants are as follows:

1. How do you feel your work of adapting curriculum and materials benefited the students for whom they were intended?
2. What do you feel you did well?
3. What would you have done differently?
4. What could we (university supervisors) do differently in the future?

Analysis

Qualitative Constant Comparative Analysis (Markku Lonkila, 1995) was used to identify emergent common constructs, themes, patterns, and relational linkages in narrative and oral data collected. Response data sheets were tagged with control numbers to establish an audit trail to original data source for later verification when revisiting original context. Each semester group of response sheets was read once by an instructor. All written responses were read a second time and repeated responses were totaled. In the transcription process, only first mentions were recorded, but repeat mentions were tallied. For example nine participants used the phrase "increased understanding," in response to questions 1, "How do you feel your work of adapting curriculum and materials benefited the students for whom they were intended?" However, only one participant reported "condensing information for the student." These similarities and differences were listed and totaled. We called these similarities and differences categories.

Ideas presented in the data were chunked and sorted into emergent themes. To discover relationships among categories and identify themes, links between data chunks were sought out and analyzed. For example in response to questions two, "What do you feel you did well?" ideas about "effective communication," "worked well with professional," and "was well organized" were grouped under the theme of "Professionalism."

This same process was repeated for each semester and across Fall semesters with the discussion group data. The large group discussion results were recorded manually during the evaluation session. There is only one record for Fall 1999 and Fall 2000 semester. Next, the data were reviewed by semester themes to determine patterns of change over time (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Finally, data sets were reviewed by university supervisors in relation to the course outline and performance requirements.

Findings

The findings are reported within questions, across questions, and as they relate to course requirements. For each questions, the identified themes and primary categories are reported. Infrequent responses are acknowledged. These findings are cross-verified with large group discussion results. The unique contributions from large group discussions are listed.

Emergent Themes Within Question

At the conclusion of the Consultation and Curriculum Adaptation course and practica experiences, the participants were asked to respond to the four research questions. The participants were informed that results would both influence course design and be reported at local, state, and national levels. Anonymity was assured.

Participants responded to the questions in writing. Following the given time for individual personal reflection, a large group discussion was facilitated. The personal responses were collected and analyzed, and the manually recorded group responses were analyzed to provide verification of the personal responses.

Emergent themes and identified categories are summarized below by question. Emergent themes are discussed in reference to most frequently occurring categories. Ideas recorded in the large group discussions that did not appear in the individual written responses are separately mentioned for each question.

Question 1. How do you feel your work adapting curriculum and materials benefited the students for whom they were intended?

Analysis of the data for question one resulted in identification of five themes. These themes were, Overall Sense of Improvement, Increased Conceptualization, Provided Specific Tools or Strategies, Subject-specific Adaptations, and Evaluation. The most frequently occurring responses were in overall sense of improvement and included categories such as increased student motivation and success, reduced difficulty, and decreased frustration. Increased conceptualization was most frequently recognized by the categories of, increased understanding, increased learning, and clarification of vague content. Numerous types of tools and strategies were identified, such as study guides, outlines, audiotapes, manipulative devices, games, memory techniques. Several subject areas were identified such as Math, Social Studies, and Reading. The only category for evaluation was simplification of tests. Infrequent responses mostly occurred for the themes, provided specific tools and strategies, and subject-specific adaptations.

Lack of response was mostly observed by the categories of no benefit, no opportunity to observe the effect on school students. Ideas from the large group discussion that were not found in written responses included the following:

I worked to incorporate lower to higher thinking skills,
Summarized the assignments,
Also beneficial to teacher;
Saved the teacher's time,
Promoted and provided motivation;
Provided a word bank,
Pre-service teachers apply knowledge from other classes,
Provided new ideas for old teacher,

Read assignments aloud to students,
Provided varied instructional methods,
Provides pre-service teacher practica experience.

Question 2: What do you feel you did well?

Four themes evolved in response to question two, these are; Materials, Professionalism, Tools and Strategies, Subject-specific Adaptations. Preteachers reported making lots of adaptations, which was the highest category for the theme, materials. This was cross-verified in large group discussion. Primary categories for the theme of professionalism are, worked well with professionals, used creativity, was well organized, and communication. The only category for tools and strategies mentioned was, gave clear directions. Areas for subject-specific adaptations included Social Studies, Spelling, Art. Infrequent responses occurred only for materials and professionalism.

Only one occurrence of no response was noted for question two. Ideas presented in large group discussion not found in individual written responses are:

Through observations came up with adaptation for one student without assistance,
Resourceful;
Returned materials in a timely fashion,
Interacted well with students,
Dedicated large amounts of time to create adaptations,
Participated in conferences with high school students.

Question 3: What would you have done differently?

Only two themes emerged in response to question three, Changes in Process and Changes in Product. Several of the categories for change in process were also mentioned in group discussion, such as, use more creativity, have more input, have more communication with consulting teachers. Other frequently occurring categories for changes in process were, focus on one child, identify the learning problem, and deal with more subject areas. The most frequently occurring category for changes in product was that of, create more adaptations. Infrequent responses included, collaborate with general educators (as well as special educators), set boundaries, consider learning styles for changes in process. Adjust vocabulary down and visual aides were infrequent responses for changes in product.

Four pre-teachers did not respond to question three. Ideas presented in large group discussion not found in individual written responses are:

Set up team approach to generate ideas,
Getting to know the students first,
Structure is important, but does not have to be rigid,
Be flexible with students,
Utilize classroom aides (paraprofessionals) more, that is why they are there.

Question 4: What could we (university supervisors) do differently in the future?

All responses to question four can be summarized in three themes; Course Structure, Course Content, and Instructor. The most frequently occurring response was related to course structure, and was categorized as specific requirements. Other categories related to course structure are: consulting teachers should know how to collaborate; hour requirement in schools was difficult; and begin practica earlier. The primary category for course content was, provide more ideas for adaptation. Responses for the theme of instructor were in the categories, be more organized, instructors collaborate, and increase communication (both with pre-teachers and consulting teachers). Infrequent responses were mostly under the theme of course structure, and included the following categories: consulting teachers should know paper work; ask what teachers want; select own adaptations; revise the practica evaluation form; and adapt materials for existing units. Under course content, one infrequent response was noted, sharing of adaptation in class. One set of one-time only responses appeared to be in juxtaposition, more shadowing – less shadowing experiences.

Five occurrences of no response to question four were recorded. Ideas presented in large group discussion not found in individual written responses are:

Provide better explanation,
Provide follow-up opportunities,
More weight for the practica grade,
Eliminate great quantities of work,
Did not allow for creativity or demand outside research,
One instructor (not 2) for practica and class, the difference is too great,
Include practica class sessions in lecture class, not during separate times.

Common Constructs and Linkages Across Questions

There are four constructs that emerged across the research questions. A construct was identified when similar themes evolved in response to more than one question (linkages) or when the number of occurrences of one theme within one question was high. The four constructs from this study relate to 1) the products of the practica experience, (2) the effect of the practica, (3) the experience in the practica, and (4) desired improvements of the practica. The first two constructs relate to the public school students who were the target of the consulting experience while the last two constructs relate to the experience of the pre-teacher.

The strongest response from the preteachers was that they created, designed or made many materials and adaptations that are used in classrooms for children who have learning needs. The materials and strategies were varied and covered several subject areas. Preteachers reported a need for the adaptations that were created; the ideas would be used in the classroom. Although some pre-teachers expressed a desire to improve the amount of input or control over the process for selecting the intervention ideas, such as clearly identifying the problem, focusing on one specific student, using more creativity, it is clear that materials and strategies were produced. Secondly the pre-teachers perceived that the adaptations resulted in increased understanding, success and learning for the public school students. As well as noting the increases, the pre-teachers reported a reduction in frustration for the students. In addition, pre-teachers reported that the consulting teacher benefited by having support to create materials and adaptations to meet multiple learning needs in the classroom, "additional hands and eyes." One response indicated that the adaptation work saved the teacher time.

The practica experience provided preteachers a professional experience. Preteachers reported having professional models and interactions that allowed them to gain and demonstrate skills in communication and collaborative consultation. Most reported that the consulting teachers received them as a professional. Many reported their own organization, use of creativity, and effective communication contributed to the experience. Preteachers made several suggestions to enhance the consultation and adaptation experience. Their suggestions were: 1) that the consulting teachers should be knowledgeable and experienced in consultation and collaboration, (2) that university instructors clearly communicate the course requirements and expectations, and (3) that university instructors' and consulting teachers' communication enhance teaming between themselves and with the preteachers. Preteachers expressed a perception that the initial presentation of the course requirements lacked organization. Pre-teachers also wanted more specific curriculum adaptations to be presented in the class lectures.

Relationship to Required Performance Criteria and Course Outline

The consulting teacher at the conclusion of the 30 hour practica experiences evaluates preteachers. Results of this study compared to practica evaluation criteria are as follows. Preteachers reported meeting the following performance criteria, 1) develop an appropriate educational program for learners with special needs, (2) demonstrate effective and appropriate professional qualities in the school settings, (3) adaptation of curriculum for diverse populations, (4) demonstrate skills in consulting and communicating with school personnel and (5) demonstrated professional performance. Performance criteria not addressed were, 1) demonstrate knowledge of contemporary issues, (2) organize, summarize, and interpret assessment data, (3) develop criterion-referenced measures, (4) develop and administer informal inventories, (5) Analyzing curriculum materials and approaches according to subject area content. Preteachers reported wanting more experience with 1) organize, summarize and interpret prior and present assessment data, and (2) analyze curriculum materials and approaches. Preteachers did not address other characteristics or skills evaluated in the performance checklist for the practica.

Weekly class lectures and activities accompany the practica experience. Results of this study are compared to unit themes and course topics as follows. Pre-teachers reported demonstrating knowledge of 1) diversity among students, (2) diverse subject areas and levels, and (3) diverse strategies. Pre-teachers reported strength in consultation and curriculum adaptations during their practica experience; this strength was reported both in the individual written responses and the large group discussion. All other course units and topics were not represented by the pre-teacher evaluation. The most frequent suggestion for course lecture and activities was to increase examples of curriculum and material adaptations.

Discussion

Interpretation

Preteachers considered this curriculum and materials adaptation practica to be a valuable professional experience, in which they performed and were treated professionally. Preteachers reported making numerous and varied adaptations to accommodate real students in authentic and difficult learning situations. However, they reported that many consulting teachers were not indicating or applying previous knowledge of consultation or collaboration. Even at the end of the semester, preteachers remained weak in their understanding of the consultation model. Although it became evident that adaptations apply to all subject areas, many preteachers expressed a need for increased presentation of ideas for adaptations. There was an apparent lack of connection between the responses in the preteacher evaluation and outlined course units and topics, as several areas of course content were not addressed in their responses. In addition, preteachers found it disjointed and disconcerting to have one course instructor and another faculty member supervise the practica, or even two section instructors and one practica supervisor.

Limitations

This study was limited in the following four ways: 1) The study was conducted in one location; (2) It relied on self-report data; (3) There was a need for further validity checking (4)There was a lack of triangulation of methods. We were a faculty team from one university looking within program at preteacher perceptions of course structure, content, and delivery. We had no outside review process whereby our sorting and coding of themes and categories could be cross-checked. An improvement strategy for increasing validity might be to address these issues with faculty from other universities and compare evaluation data. We were dealing with self-report responses of preteachers at the end of the semester. Perhaps probing their responses over time could provide a better measure of how reliably responses occurred in identified categories. Finally, to further ensure validity, perhaps a member-checking procedure could be implemented for the data emanating from the large group discussions.

Implications

The findings from this study have implications for the field, teacher preparation, and further research. Providing supports for rural teachers through curriculum and materials adaptation allows teachers to concentrate on meeting the needs of diverse learners in the classroom (Tomlinson, 1995). Teachers require further inservice support to enhance their application of consultation and collaboration models. Preteachers benefit from explicit modeling and examples of ideas for adaptations. Preteachers can gain skills in consultation and curriculum adaptation through practica experience. For this course, university instructors and practica supervisors need to increase teaming to reduce confusion and vagueness. In addition, this course may benefit from one instructor replacing the two-instructor delivery model, or by creating regular teaming approaches to course content presentation. Lastly related to the course, highlighting the various types and methods for creating curriculum adaptations may be advisable. Further research in this area might include a comparative study of preteachers' logs of consulting activities with evaluation of their performance, and a more descriptive look at the specific adaptations created by preteachers as related to "best practice" research. Participatory research is situated in authentic problems within real classroom settings, thus it gains wider acceptance from practicing teachers as an introspective rather than didactic activity (Boudah & Knight, 1999). This study is educationally useful because allowing students to provide critical input has provided both a basis for reflexive learning on the part of preservice teachers (Dewey, 1933; Posner, 1991) and has allowed university faculty to reconsider structure, content, and delivery.

References

Boudah, D. J., & Knight, S. L. (1999). Creating learning communities of research & practice: Participatory research and development. In D. Byrd and J. McIntyre (Eds.)Teacher Education Yearbook, VII (pp.97-114). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Creswell, J.W. (1998). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five traditions. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Deschenes, C., Ebeling, D. & Sprague, J. (1996). Adapting Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms: A teacher's desk reference. Bloomington, IN: Center for School and Community Integration, a University of Indiana Affiliated Program.

Deschler, D. D., Schumaker, J. B., Alley, G. R., Warner, M. M. & Clark, F. L. (1982). Learning Disabilities in Adolescent and young adult populations: Research implications. Focus on Exceptional Children, 15(1), 1-12.

Dewey, J. (1933). How we think: A statement of the relation of reflexive thinking to the educative process. Chicago: D. C. Heath.

The Education for All Handicapped Children of 1975 (PL 94-142).

Friend, M. & Cook, L. (1998). Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals. NY, NY: Longman.

Hover, J. J. & Patton, J. R. (1997). Curriculum adaptations for students with learning and behavior problems: Principles and practices. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

IDEA Amendments of 199720 USC 1474(b)(3)(A).

Ludlow, B., Wienke, W. (1998). A Collaborative Program to Prepare Mainstream Teachers: Using peer supervision by general and special educations, ACRES Conference Proceedings, Charleston, SC.

Markula Lonkila. Grounded theory as an emerging paradigm. In Udo Kelle, (Ed.)(1995). Computer-aided qualitative data analysis: Theory, methods, and practice. Thousand Oaks, CA Sage Publications.

Martin, S.M. and Williams, J.M. (2000). Personnel preparation and service delivery issues in rural and remote areas: Best practice information. American Council on Rural Special Education, 2000 Conference Proceedings, Alexandria, VA.

Miles, & Huberman, (1994). Qualitative data analysis, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Posner, G. J. (1991). Field Experience: A guide to reflective teaching, 4th ed. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Schumm, J. S. & Vaughn, S. (1992). Planning for mainstreamed special education students: Perceptions of general classroom teachers. Exceptionality, 3, 81-98.

Tomlinson, C.A. (1995). How to differentiate instruction in mixed ability classrooms. Alexandria, PA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

USDOE (1997). Nineteenth annual report to congress on the implementation of the individuals with disabilities education act. Washington, D. C.: Author.

Rebecca Newcom Belcher
Lincoln University
820 Chestnut
452A MLK
Jefferson City, MO 65102

PREDICTIVE FACTORS FOR THE ENROLLMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PRESERVICE PROGRAMS

The need for highly qualified diverse special educators has reached crisis proportions. Every state reported a serious shortage of special education classroom teachers during the past school year (NCPSE, 2000). There is an alarming racial disparity between students and teachers in our nation's schools that threatens to impact the quality of education for all students. Currently nine out of ten teachers are Caucasian nationwide, while students of color represent 37% of elementary and secondary school students (Alliance for Equity in Higher Education, 2000). The racial composition of the teaching staff and the disparities in representatives of Caucasian and African American males in special education were studied in ten United State cities, Atlanta, Cleveland, Miami, Chicago, Houston, Detroit, New York, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and San Diego (Herrera, 1998). A relationship was found between the number of African American male students placed in special education and the number of Caucasian teachers in the school system. Currently enrollment in teacher education programs is identified as over 80% Caucasian and 16% minority (Alliance for Equity in Higher Education, 2000).

The United States is significantly more diverse than it was at the beginning of the last century. In 1999, the United States Census Bureau reported that 72% of the total population was Caucasian.

Table 1

Percentage of Total United States Population

	2000	2020	2040	2050
Caucasian	72	64	56	53
Asian & Pacific Islanders	4	6	8	9
African American	12	13	13	13
Hispanic	12	17	22	24
Native American	1	1	1	1

It is projected that by 2060, the country will be evenly divided between a white and non-white population (Chinn, 2000).

This severe shortage of teachers of color deprives students of color of role models and denies all students the benefits of a diverse educational experience. If the nation does not invest in educating more teachers of color then the racial, cultural, and economic gaps in society will widen and endanger the future (Alliance for Equity in Higher Education, 2000).

Research Design

This research study was undertaken to identify which factors were predictive of African American students enrolling in special education preservice teacher preparation programs. The research design was based on survey research. A questionnaire was developed based on current literature review and interviews of professors employed in preservice teacher preparation programs. A panel of experts reviewed the questionnaire for content, clarity of presentation, ease of administration, and avoidance of biased questions. The draft questionnaire was revised in agreement with the reviewers' comments. The finalized instrument contained 22 questions on a 5 point Likert scale with 1 representing a decisive factor in the decision, 2 representing a minor factor in the decision, 3 representing a factor in the decision, 4 representing a factor that was not a contributing factor in the decision, and 5 representing a factor that was not available or applicable in the decision. On the instrument there was an area to identify any additional factors not already mentioned. The demographic data identified year and major in college as well as first generation college student.

Target Populations

Two populations, national and state, were identified for the study. The national population was Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCUs) with an undergraduate preserve special education teacher preparation program. The state population was public and private universities/colleges with undergraduate preservice special education teacher preparation programs within the state of Missouri.

Sample Populations

Each HBCU was contracted to verify the presence of an undergraduate preservice special education teacher preparation program and the name and address of the appropriate contact person. Of the 136 HBCUs only 24 self-identified as having an undergraduate preservice special education teacher preparation program. The name and address of a contact person at each HBCU was acquired.

A total of 23 universities/colleges were contacted in the state of Missouri. Only 19 self-identified as having an undergraduate preservice special education teacher preparation program. A contact person was identified at each university/college.

A letter requesting the names and addresses of African American students at each university/college was forwarded to each contact person. The intent was to develop a database of students and then randomly select a sample population for HBCUs and Missouri. A large number of the universities/colleges stated that in agreement with university/college policy they could not or desired not to give out students' names and address. The original research design call for a random stratified sample of 9 students from each university/college from the following categories:

3 African American students admitted to the special education program, age range of 18 - 20
3 African American students admitted to the special education program, age range of 20 - 23
3 African American students admitted to the special education program, age of 24 plus

The research design was altered based on the inability to get a listing of students. The contact person at each HBCU or Missouri university/college identified 9 African American students as listed above. Several of the universities/colleges in Missouri notified the researcher that they did not have a total of 9 African American students in their preservice special education teacher preparation program, so they self-selected to not participate in the research study. In the state of Missouri 11 universities/colleges did not have 9 African American students enrolled in special education preservice teacher preparation programs. The final sample populations were 25 HBCUs and 8 Missouri public universities/colleges.

Response Rates

Each contact person was provided with 9 self addressed pre-franked surveys to distribute to 9 students that they identified. The surveys were designed to that the participants could staple or tape the survey closed and drop it in a mailbox. This allowed for confidentiality of responses. A follow-up mailing occurred one month after the first mailing. The sample of HBCUs had a 33% response rate while the sample of Missouri's universities/colleges had a 25% response rate.

Findings

Table 2 portrays the factors HBCU students identified as decisive in their decision to enroll in preservice special education teacher preparation programs. Table 3 portrays the combination of decisive and minor factors identified by students enrolled in HBCUs.

Table 2

Decisive Factors for HBCU Sample Population

Item Number	Item	% of Response
20	My desire to advocate for special needs students who share my cultural background	58.5
18	The inspiration of a special needs person	54
21	My desire to reverse the over-representation of African American students in special education programs	50

Table 3

Combination of Decisive and Minor Factors for HBCU Sample Population

Item Number	Item	% of Response
20	My desire to advocate for special needs students who share my cultural background	66.5
21	My desire to reverse the over-representation of African American students in special education programs	61
18	The inspiration of a special needs person	59
2	Encouragement from a parent, family member or close friend	58
17	The availability of jobs in special education	57

Table 4 portrays the factors students enrolled in Missouri universities/colleges identified as decisive in their decision making process. Table 5 portrays the combination of decisive and minor factors identified by students in the Missouri sample.

Table 4

Decisive Factors for Missouri Sample Population

Item Number	Item	% of Response
18	The inspiration of a special needs person	83
19	My feeling of a calling to be a special educator	83
2	Encouragement from a parent, family member or close friend	67

Table 5

Combination of Decisive and Minor Factors for Missouri Sample Population

Item Number	Item	% of Response
19	My feeling of a calling to be a special educator	100
18	The inspiration of a special needs person	83

The findings included all returned surveys. None of the surveys were removed because of missing data.

Conclusions

The mission of many HBCUs is providing excellent educational opportunities for a diverse student population. Out of the 136 HBCUs only 24 currently have undergraduate preservice special education programs. Frequently, the special education program is housed in the College or Department of education rather than as a separate department. Only 17% of HBCUs are currently preparing special educators. A national concern exists regarding the over-representation of African American students in special education programs. Research by Herrera (1998) has identified a higher special education placement rate of African American male students with Caucasian teachers. Yet the current United States teaching force is composed of only 4% African American teachers. Participants (50%) from HBCUs in this study identified item 21, "My desire to reverse the over-representation of African American students in special education programs", as a decisive factor in enrolling in preservice special education teacher preparation programs. Closely related to over-representation of African American students in programs is item 20, "My desire to advocate for special needs students who share my cultural background". This item was a decisive factor for 58.5% and a combination factor, decisive and minor, of 66.50% of responding participants enrolled in preservice special education teacher preparation programs at HBCUs. It may be possible that African American students who self select to attend HBCUs and enroll in teacher preparation programs are more concerned with advocating and over-representation. This is a question for further research. This research study can only identify these two factors as important factors in the decision making process in selecting special education teacher preparation programs.

Another factor for participants enrolled in HBCUs is item 18, " The inspiration of a special needs person". This is a decisive factor for 54% and a combination factor, decisive and minor, for 59% of the participants. This life experience can not be replicated in recruitment materials. This experience can not be created or controlled. This study can identify it as a factor in the decision making process.

For 20% of the respondents, item 1 "The presence of African American special education faculty members at my college/university", was not a factor in their decision. This can be linked to items 13,"The portrayal of African American teachers in television series or in movies", which for 18% of the respondents was not a factor in their decision. This study appears to indicate that a role model is not a factor in the decision to enroll in special education preservice teacher preparation programs.

Also, item 5, " Knowledge of forgivable loans and/or scholarships", was not a factor in their decision for 19% of the respondents. For 18% of the respondents, item 14, "The salary and fringe benefits package available to special education teachers", was not a factor. Item 7, "Full or partial tuition scholarships provided by my college/university for special education majors", was not a factor for 10% of the respondents. It appears that the financial aspects of college and teaching were not a factor for 19% - 10% of the respondents.

In contrast to the HBCUs, the students in Missouri's universities/colleges did not select item 20 as a decisive factor in their decision to enroll in special education teacher preparation programs. For 83% of the Missourians the decisive factor is item 18, "The inspiration of a special needs person". The combination factor, decisive and minor, for 100% of the Missouri respondents is item 19, "My feeling of a calling to be a special educator". Item 19 is a decisive factor for 83% of the respondents. These results are in conflict with the HBCU results. It is difficult to draw conclusions based on the small state sample. In addition, comparing national and state populations may not be accurate because of a number of conflicting variables, such as life experiences of individual students, economic situations, local environments, etc. This research study can identify that for Missouri African American students enrolled in preservice special education teacher preparation programs that two decisive factors in the decision making process are the inspiration of a special needs person and the feeling of a calling to the profession.

Recommendations

An intensified effort to increase African American students' enrollment in special education preservice teacher preparation programs must be begun, especially in the state of Missouri. To increase the enrollment recruitment efforts must focus on the decisive factors identified by the respondents. Recruitment materials developed nationally for the purpose of increasing African American student enrollment in special education preservice teacher preparation programs should focus on the benefits of pursuing a career as a special educator to advocate for other African American students and to reverse the over-representation of African American students in special education programs. The financial advantages of forgivable loans and scholarships, and teaching are not a factor to be included in the recruitment materials. The issue of role models is not a factor in the decision making process and therefore, should not be in the recruitment materials.

Recruitment materials developed for use in the state of Missouri should reflect the inspiration of a special needs person and the feeling of a calling to be special educator. Once again, the financial aspects of college and teaching are not a factor that needs to be in the materials based on this research. Role models are not a factor in the decision so it does not need to be included in the recruitment materials.

Additional research in the area of decisive factors needs to be completed.

References

Alliance for Equity in Higher Education. (2000). Educating the emerging majority: The role of minority-serving colleges & universities in confronting America's teacher crisis. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Chinn, P. J. (2000). [Placement of students of color in special education classes]. Unpublished raw data.

Herrera, J. (1998). The disproportionate placement of African Americans in special education: An analysis of ten cities. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. Ed 423 324)

Gayle Melville, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Director, Project ReNew
Southeastern Louisiana University
Department of Teaching and Learning
SLU Box 10749
Hammond, LA 70402

James Miller, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, College of Education
University of New Orleans
Lakefront
New Orleans, LA 70148

Suzanne Martin, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean, College of Education
University of Central Florida
P.O. Box 161992
Orlando, FL 32816-1992

Myra Rogers, M.Ed.
Coordinator, Project ReNew
Southeastern Louisiana University
Department of Teaching and Learning
SLU Box 10749
Hammond, LA 70402

RURAL/URBAN PARTNERSHIPS:
A MODEL FOR INCREASING THE QUALITY OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

As we begin the 21st Century, schools are faced with the challenge of preparing all students to be involved and productive members of our society. Recognizing the difficulty and complexity of this challenge, educators nationwide are restructuring schools, curricula, and teacher development activities and rethinking the ways by which we educate our country's youth. One outcome of this challenge has been a greater emphasis on the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education environments. In fact, the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1997) states that students with disabilities are to be educated Ato the maximum extent possible with children who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular education environment occur only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular class with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily" (20 U.S.C. 1412 (5)B). Additionally, IDEA requires that there be one curriculum, the general education curriculum, which all students, regardless of the level of disability, must address. This requires that general and special educators, and other educational service providers, work together to provide an increasing number of diverse students with appropriate and higher quality instruction and services.

The U.S. Department of Education indicated that there is a national chronic shortage of education personnel and high percentages of non-certified personnel, and that these factors are even greater in rural, inner city, and high-poverty areas (Quality Counts, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). The State of Louisiana consistently reports critical shortages of certified and qualified personnel trained to meet the diverse needs of the school population (Louisiana Annual School Report, 1996-1997; 1997-1998; 1998-1999; 1999-2000). Most of these non-certified teachers have not had adequate training in best practices regarding inclusive education techniques and strategies. In fact, many experienced and certified teachers, particularly those who teach in general education classrooms, have not received adequate, updated training on inclusive education.

The 18th Annual Report to Congress (1996) reported that 43% of students with disabilities nationally were served in general education classes, while only 22.5% of Louisiana students with disabilities were served in general education classes. Alarmingly, while the percentage of inclusive general education placements increased nationally by 6%, Louisiana=s percentage of general education placements actually decreased by 3%.

This situation must be addressed with an effective support system that evolves from collaborative input, shared responsibility, and collaborative decision making among general and special educators in institutions of higher education and local education agencies. Such a support system is not in place in many areas of Louisiana and is particularly difficult to find in high-poverty and rural areas where resources to support a systematic approach are minimal to non-existent. The special conditions of poverty, rural isolation, inner-city decay, increased incidences of violence and other factors which are significant in Louisiana must be addressed.

Providing inclusive services to students with disabilities in rural and remote areas presents a variety of unique challenges. Recruitment and retention of qualified personnel requires ongoing efforts of school districts in rural areas nationwide. Professional development opportunities and access to educational materials and technology exacerbate the problems of recruitment and retention in rural areas (Hillkirk, Chang, Oettinger, Saban, & Villet, 1998). Other critical issues related to rural education include travel and poverty. This paper describes Project ReNew: Renewing General Education Teachers to Teach Students with Disabilities, a three-year federally funded grant.

Project ReNew was designed to prepare general education teachers to be more effective in inclusive classrooms. This preparation includes certification in mild/moderate disabilities. The project was also designed in response to the need for major changes in teacher preparation in order to deliver educational services to students with disabilities that lead to positive, measurable educational outcomes. The project is a collaborative effort among Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU), the University of New Orleans (UNO), and four Louisiana public school systems: Tangipahoa Parish Schools, Orleans Parish Schools, Livingston Parish Schools, and Jefferson Parish Schools. Research-based and extensive field-based training opportunities are employed in the four local school districts, each of which includes areas of high-poverty. Tangipahoa and Livingston Parishes are rural areas. Jefferson is located in a large metropolitan area, while Orleans is inner city urban in structure. The residents of these parishes are from diverse backgrounds and include individuals from African American, Cajun, Vietnamese, Native

American, Hispanic, Anglo-American, and Creole descent. Project personnel recognized the need for more certified and highly qualified minority teachers by partnering with a school system that is comprised of a 98% minority student population, and a majority of teachers from diverse minority cultural backgrounds. In fact, students and teachers in all four parishes represent diverse cultural backgrounds.

Project ReNew has a total of 60 general educators divided into four cohorts of 15 teachers each. Beginning in the first year of funding, Cohort 1 began a program of study designed to provide certification in mild/moderate disabilities. Each succeeding semester another cohort began the prescribed course of study. Each cohort will complete the entire sequence of study in three semesters and one summer term. Each cohort served as mentors for participants from the next start-up cohort (cohort 1 mentored cohort 2, etc). Cohort 1 was mentored by university personnel. Each participant was required to select a "partner" from special education for practica and field-based requirements. This provided additional mentoring and support, and provided additional opportunities for collaborative activities. The course of study was prescribed by the Louisiana State Department of Education for add-on certification in mild/moderate disabilities. However, the sequence of courses was determined by grant personnel. All course syllabi were reviewed and modified to include components which addressed inclusion, poverty, urban and rural issues.

For many of the participants in Project ReNew, the issue of traveling long distances for instruction presented an economic hardship (e.g., childcare issues, fuel, etc.). In response to this need, project personnel employed alternate course delivery strategies, including distance learning through compressed video, web-based courses, web-enhanced courses, combined course offerings, and school-based instruction. Additionally, all field-based and practica requirements were completed in the participants= home-based schools. Project participants also received a stipend and paid tuition in order to reduce expenditures.

SLU and UNO collaborated in providing course delivery to Project ReNew participants. Doctoral students from UNO were utilized for observation and supervision in courses requiring a practicum. Additionally, doctoral students completed research activities which resulted in three instructional modules and video segments that were subsequently developed by project staff. Module development included introductory, intermediate, and advanced components. Topics included respectively collaborative inclusion, curriculum development and instructional strategies for the inclusive classroom, and inclusive school models and the change process. It is anticipated that modules and video segments will be shared for instructional purposes with educational personnel at the collaborating universities, and in the local educational agencies participating in the project.

Prior to the project=s initiation, an Advisory Council was selected which was comprised of individuals from participating universities, general and special educators, parents of students with disabilities, and local school administrators. This council will collaboratively address problems and provide input to project personnel throughout the duration of the grant to maximize the effect of project services. Project activities will also be coordinated and linked to current state initiatives and efforts to provide professional development and support to educators and parents of students with disabilities, including: Positive Behavioral Support Project, Effective Practices Network, Blue Ribbon Commission Mandates, and the Louisiana Transition Project.

A library of resources was purchased for use by project participants. These resources included videos, laptop computers, educational software, and printed materials on targeted topics such as inclusion, behavior, accommodations and modifications, collaboration and co-teaching, and rural/urban issues.

An important aspect of Project ReNew is the emphasis on collaboration between participating universities (SLU and UNO). This project was the result of a collaborative effort in the design and implementation of the project in order to meet the needs of local educational agencies in the state. These efforts continue on an ongoing basis through joint planning and monitoring activities. Specific collaborative activities include participation at scheduled Advisory Council meetings, regularly scheduled conferences among project staff and participating UNO faculty, and joint course delivery. For example, a recent activity included students from each university registering for a course which was delivered via compressed video and co-taught by a faculty member from each university. Course syllabi and requirements were merged in order to meet grant objectives.

At the completion of Project ReNew it is expected that the skills and competencies acquired by project participants and their special education partners will generalize to other faculty, staff, and parents in each participant=s home-based school. By providing a specialized comprehensive preparation program, it is expected that teachers will remain and work effectively in the local school systems following certification. Other important outcomes of this project include:

1. Teachers will receive technical assistance and support as project participants, thereby reducing attrition.
2. Project participants will exit the project with an established support system of peers and university personnel.
3. Project participants and personnel will have developed a resource file from which to draw information.
4. Project participants will share resources and professional knowledge gained from the project with other educators and families.
5. All project participants will have access to enrolling in courses designed for alternative course delivery.
6. Project participants will receive financial benefits through tuition support, stipends, and reduced travel.
7. All future graduate students enrolled in the certification programs at participating universities will benefit from the rural and poverty issues and inclusive best practices being infused into courses.
8. Model demonstration sites exemplifying inclusive best practices will be developed for use by other professional educators.

References

Hillkirk, K., Chang, V., Oettinger, L.A., Saban, A., & Villet, C. (1998). Supporting on-going professional learning in rural schools. Rural Educator, 19(3), 20-24.

Louisiana Department of Education (1996-1997). Louisiana Annual School Report.. Baton Rouge: Author.

Louisiana Department of Education (1997-1998). Louisiana Annual School Report.. Baton Rouge: Author.

Louisiana Department of Education (1998-1999). Louisiana Annual School Report.. Baton Rouge: Author.

Louisiana Department of Education (1999-2000). Louisiana Annual School Report.. Baton Rouge: Author.

Public Law 105-17, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997. 111 Statute 37.

Quality Counts '98: The urban challenge – Public education in the 50 states (1998, January 8). An Education Week/Pew Charitable Trusts special report on the condition of education in the 50 states. Volume XVII, No. 17. Marion, Ohio: Education Week.

U.S. Department of Education (1996). To assure the free and appropriate public education of all children with disabilities. Eighteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Education (1998). To assure the free and appropriate public education of all children with disabilities. Twentieth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Washington, D.C.

Ronda Menlove
Utah State University
2865 Old Main Hill
Logan, Utah 84322-2865
rmenlove@cc.usu.edu

Benjamin Lignugaris-Kraft
Utah State University
2865 Old Main Hill
Logan, Utah 84322-2865
lig@cc.usu.edu

UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERS GO THE DISTANCE TO "GROW" SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Critical Shortages of Special Education Teachers

The United States is reportedly facing the largest teacher shortages in history (Pipho, 1998). The shortages are most pronounced for teachers of students with disabilities (Boe, Cook, Bobbit, & Terhanian, 1998; Simpson, Whalen & Zabel, 1993). Critical shortages of special education teachers are not new and not limited to a specific geographic region or type of community (Billingsley, 1993; Boe, Cook, Bobbitt & Terhanian, 1998; Brownell & Smith, 1992). The shortages are pervasive and impact rural and urban districts alike (Lauritzen & Friedman, 1993).

The Department of Education reports that 28,000 new teachers are needed annually and that higher education institutions only supply approximately 18,000 per year (20th Annual Report to Congress, 1998). From 1987 to 1996 there was a chronic yearly shortage of 27,000 special educators. During the 1995-1996 school year alone, there was a nationwide shortage of approximately 33,000 fully certified special education teachers. About 1.1% of these positions were never filled, while 7.9% were filled by teachers who were not fully certified (20th Annual Report to Congress, 1998).

Shortages of certified special education teachers are most critical in rural areas of the country (Koury, Ludlow, & Weinke, 1991; Robins, 1994). Although the total number of special education teachers needed in rural areas is not as large as the number in urban areas, filling these open teaching positions may be more problematic (Thurston & Sebastian, 1996). Rural special education teachers may be difficult to recruit and may not stay as long in their positions thus creating higher levels of attrition and greater continual demand for teachers in rural areas. In a survey of 158 rural special education teachers, Westling and Whitten (1996) found that only 57% of the special education teachers surveyed reported that they were likely to be in their current position in 5 years.

Utah is experiencing critical special education teacher shortages in all areas of the state. In response to a long history of chronic shortages, the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) created a critical personnel shortages committee to study the problem. The committee is comprised of district special education directors, university special education faulty, and USOE staff. In a 1997-2000 study commissioned by the committee, researchers found that approximately 10% of the special education teachers working in Utah schools left the classroom each year (Anderson, Menlove, & Salzberg, in press; Adams, Menlove, & Salzberg, 2001). Many of these vacated special education teaching positions were filled with non-licensed "teachers." In some cases these "teachers" were long-term substitutes without college degrees or special education training.

Training Teachers in Their Local Communities

One strategy to address special education teacher shortages is to bring university special education teacher preparation programs to rural communities via distance education (Menlove, Hansford, & Lignugaris-Kraft, 2000). This approach allows local community members to become trained to take special education teaching positions within the schools. By assisting communities to "grow their own" teachers, many barriers associated with attracting and retaining professionals from outside the community are reduced. Community members, who are trained and certified to teach, are more likely to remain in the community because of such things as cultural ties, community pride, geographical constraints, family relationships, and a desire to improve their community (Recruiting New Teachers, 2000).

The Utah State University Departments of Special Education and Rehabilitation and Extension, in partnership with local school districts, offer bachelor's degrees and teacher certification for mild/moderate special education teachers in rural Utah areas. The Utah teachers, who are trained in the rural communities where they live, are more likely to stay and work in their rural communities (Binner, 1998). The teachers are community members with strong commitments to local students. They have already made a commitment to live in the rural community.

The preservice special education teachers receive training delivered to their local communities via a variety of distance education technologies. On campus and local adjunct faculty deliver the same courses to distance students as they deliver to on campus students. A significant portion of the training for special education teachers, however, takes place in field-based practica experiences in local school classrooms (Koury et al., 1991; McDevitt, 1996). Because the local schools are located from two to four hours from the university campus, the question of who will supervise the field-based experiences is a problem. The most effective model for supervision is a traditional triadic model including a cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and pre-service teacher (Giebelhaus, 1995). Both a cooperating teacher and university supervisor are needed. The university supervisor teaches general principles and assists the preservice teachers to incorporate both theoretical and practical experiences into teaching (Kauffman, 1992). The university supervisor may suggest newly developed teaching strategies or instructional programs. The triadic model of supervision, however, is only effective when there are frequent visits involving all three members (Giebelhaus, 1995). If the field-based experience occurs in a remote rural location, frequent visits may not be feasible.

One solution to this problem is to train local community cooperating teachers to conduct some of the visits, which may be cost effective and practical (Keller & Grossman, 1994). Unfortunately, Koskela and Ganser (1995) report that cooperating teachers rarely have time available to observe and provide feedback to their field-based students. Cooperating teachers may also be unsure about how to deal with students who are not performing satisfactorily, how to evaluate the students, how to direct them, and how to deal with differences in teaching styles (Koskela & Ganser, 1995).

Incorporating distance education technology may also increase interaction between students, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors. Internet-based two-way audio video conferencing has reduced the cost of distance technology interaction and made remote supervision feasible (Binner, 1998; Falconer & Lignugaris-Kraft, in press; Fodor-Davis, 1996; Menlove, Hansford, & Lignugaris-Kraft, 2000). With a two-way audio video conferencing system, university supervisors can observe remote field-based teaching experiences from a site on campus. This type of technology may not only reduce feelings of isolation among distance education students, but also provides opportunities for collaboration between cooperating teachers and campus instructors (McDevitt, 1996).

In a move to incorporate on-site supervision and remote technology supervision, USU special education faculty developed a model for supervising students participating in practica and student teaching experiences in remote rural sites. This model combines training local community adjunct university supervisors and cooperating teachers with remote site supervision using two-way audio video teleconferencing technology (Binner, 1998; Falconer & Lignugaris-Kraft, in press; Menlove, Hansford, & Lignugaris-Kraft; Pemberton & Harris, 1997). On campus faculty train local district special educators to use the skills necessary to be effective university supervisors and cooperating teachers. Faculty, supervisors, and cooperating teachers then conduct supervision together using the two-way audio video teleconferencing technology. This allows both on campus and on site supervisors to hear and see what is happening in the remote site classroom. The amount and quality of feedback and training that students receive in remote sites is the same as that received by on campus students.

University and District Partnerships

In the USU Mild/Moderate Special Education Distance Education Program, university faculty members and rural school special educators truly become partners in an effort to train local community members to become certified special education teachers. The partnerships serve multiple purposes including recruiting students to enter the program, teaching didactic courses via distance education, and providing supervision in field-based practica and student teaching.

Recruiting students. Local school district special education administrators and special education teachers identify community members who may be interested in teacher careers. They distribute USU program information to the potential teachers and arrange for meetings with university advisors. When asked to identify reasons why rural special education teachers would leave, some teachers reported that the quality of the community was a problem (Westling & Whitten, 1996). Potential teachers who are already know the community variables and are committed to living in there, may not leave due to community reasons.

The population most often identified by districts partners as potential teachers are paraeducators working in special education classrooms. Paraeducators who work in communities experiencing teacher shortages are a rich source of candidates who could be prepared, certificated, and employed as special educators. In the 21st Annual Report to Congress, the Office of Special Education reported that in 1996-97 there were 237,206 paraeducators serving students with disabilities. This large pool of people is already committed to working with students with disabilities. Many have veteran status within schools, knowledge of school operations, experience working with the students in their community, reduced language barriers, knowledge and appreciation for the cultural diversity, and an increased likelihood that they will remain in the community long term once their training is completed. The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education reports that the number of paraeducators working in public schools is expected to continue to grow (Genzuk, Lavendez & Krashen, 1994; Recruiting New Teachers, 2000).

In an attempt to increase resources and support for students in remote rural communities, USU has hired local part-time advisors in each of the locations served by the distance education degree/certification program. The part-time advisors are either local district special education teachers or parents who have successfully completed the distance education program and obtained a bachelor's degree and teacher certification in special education. The advisors collaborate with the community USU extension programs, the main campus department, and the local school districts. They recruit potential students and provide support for students progressing through the program.

Not only are the advisors providing a valuable service for the university and the students, they are participating in an intensive professional development activity. Their careers are enhanced as they learn university requirements and protocol and as they become resident "experts" in their local districts.

Teaching didactic courses. Due to the tremendous demand for special education teachers, university faculty resources are often stretched to meet that demand. University faculty members teach special education distance education courses in addition to their regular on campus instructional load. At times, faculty members are unable to teach an additional distance education section. When that happens, local school district special educators are hired and trained to teach the courses. The district personnel become adjunct instructors for the university and partners in the university community. The local district educators are most often district level special education administrators or high-skilled, experienced teachers who are understand the USU program.

Local special education teachers, state level special educators, and parents of students with disabilities are invited to be guest lecturers in the didactic training courses. Practicing special educators and parents bring a unique perspective to class instruction. They provide a practical, day-to-day perspective that university faculty sometimes lack. They are able to share real life, up-to-date experiences with students with disabilities. They provide the applied practical reality that compliments the theory presented in many didactic courses. Students are able to see how the knowledge that they are learning can be applied in actual classroom settings.

Supervising field-based practica and student teaching. USU special education faculty members have developed a university-district partnership model for supervising students participating in practica and student teaching experiences in remote rural sites. Community adjunct university supervisors and cooperating teachers are trained by university faculty to supervise field-based practica courses. Supervisors are often district level special educators who completed or are familiar with the USU program. Cooperating teachers are often graduates of the USU on campus or distance education program. They assist with supervision in partnership with the adjunct supervisors. On campus faculty train the adjunct supervisors and cooperating teachers to use the skills necessary to be effective university supervisors and cooperating teachers. Training is conducted on site, on campus, and via distance education technology. Training is updated each time a practicum is taught and also prior to and during student teaching. To maintain consistency of on and off campus observations, university faculty conduct reliability observations with adjunct supervisors.

University and district supervisors and cooperating teachers also supervise students together using remote two-way audio video teleconferencing technology (Binner, 1998; Falconer & Lignugaris-Kraft, in press; Menlove, Hansford, & Lignugaris-Kraft; Pemberton & Harris, 1997). This allows both on campus and on site supervisors to hear and see what is happening in the remote site classroom at the same time. The amount and quality of feedback and training that students receive in remote sites is increased and mirrors that received by on campus students.

Conclusions

Training special education teachers in a university-district partnership provides growth opportunities for university faculty, district special education administrators, local special education teachers, and community members who become students and then much needed teachers. Students are recruited from rural communities and have the opportunity to grow and achieve teacher status as they complete bachelor's degrees and receive teacher certification. A number of district personnel become advisors, instructors, supervisors, and some also receive master's degrees via distance education courses delivered in their communities. Their professional growth impacts the quality of the teaching cadre, which positively impacts student learning in rural schools.

Just over six years ago the first cohort of nine students started taking classes in the first USU special education distance education mild/moderate program in a rural eastern Utah community. High rates of attrition and technology challenges plagued this initial cohort. About 55% or 5 of the students earned bachelor's degrees and became certified special education teachers. In the following two years the program was expanded to a starting group of 24 students in two rural Utah areas. At the completion of the program, only 50% or 12 students graduated. The current cohort group was expanded to 41 students in seven rural and urban sites. Approximately 73% or 30 of the students will complete degrees and become fully certified. Of the 30 students, 4 will also complete master's degrees. Five of the current students are moving from regular education to special education teacher positions.

Increased program completion rates support the fact that university faculty have become better distance educators, that more effective student support systems have been constructed, that distance education delivery methods and technologies have improved, and that local districts have become stronger partners in recruiting and training quality candidates for the program.

References

Adams, E., Menlove, R., & Salzberg, C. L. (2001). Utah State Office of Education, special education personnel attrition study. Unpublished raw data.

Anderson, D., Menlove, R. & Salzberg, C. L. (in press). Special education teacher attrition: How many are leaving? Where are they going? The Researcher.

Billingsley, B. S. (1993). Teacher retention and attrition in special and general education: A critical review of the literature. The Journal of Special Education, 27(2), 137-174.

Binner, K. (1998). The perceived benefits and limitations of using two-way conferencing technology to supervise preservice teachers in a remote teacher training program. Unpublished master's thesis, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

Boe, E. E., Cook, L. H., Bobbitt, S. A., & Terhanian, G. (1998). The shortage of fully certified teachers in special and general education. Teacher Education and Special Education, 21(1), 1-21.

Brownell, M. T., & Smith, S. W. (1992). Attrition/retention of special education teachers: Critique of current research and recommendations for retention efforts. Teacher Education and Special Education, 15(4), 229-248.

Giebelhaus, C. R. (1995, February). Revisiting a step-child: Supervision in teacher education. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association of Teacher Educators, Detroit, MI.

Falconer, K. B., & Lignugaris-Kraft, B. (in press). A qualitative analysis of the benefits and limitations of using two-way conferencing technology to supervise preservice teachers in remote locations. Teacher Education and Special Education.

Fodor-Davis, J. (1996). Desktop video conferencing: K-12 school and university uses and implications. Technology and Teacher Education Annual. Paper presented at the Society for Technology and Teacher Education Conference, Phoenix, AR.

Genzuk, M., Lavadenz, M., and Krashen, S. (Winter 1994). "Paraeducators: A source for remedying the shortage of teachers for limited English-proficient students." The Journal of Education Issuers of Language Minority Students, 14, 211-222.

Kauffmann, D. (1992). Supervision of student teachers (Report No. EDO-SP-91-7). Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvements. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 344 873)

Keller, D. L., & Grossman, J. A. (1994, October). A model for improving the pre-service teacher/cooperating teacher diad. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

Koskela, R., & Ganser, T. (1995, February). Exploring the role of cooperating teachers in relationship to personal career development. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, Detroit, MI.

Koury, K. A., Ludlow, B. L., & Weinke, C. (1991, March). A collaborative approach to on-the-job practicum supervision of rural teachers. Paper presented at the Rural Education Symposium, Nashville, TN.

Lauritzen, P., & Friedman, S. J. (1993). Meeting the supply/demand requirements of the individuals with disabilities education act. Teacher Education and Special Education, 16(3), 221-229.

McDevitt, M. A. (1996) . A virtual view: Classroom observations at a distance. Journal of Teacher Education, 47(3), 191-195.

Menlove, R., Hansford, D., & Lignugaris-Kraft. (2000). Creating a community of distance learners: putting technology to work. Proceedings of the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) Annual Conference, 247-253. Washington, D. C.

Pemberton, J. B., & Harris, R. W. (1997). Remote supervision of rural teachers via interactive audio video technology (Uintah School District). Unpublished grant application.

Pipho, C. (1998). A 'real' teacher shortage. Phi Delta Kappan, 80(3), 181-2.

Recruiting New Teachers. (2000). A guide to developing paraeducator-to-teacher programs. Belmont, MA: Author.

Simpson, R. L., Whelan, R. J., & Zabel, R. H. (1993). Special education personnel preparation in the 21st century: Issues and strategies. Remedial and Special Education, 14(2), 7-22.

Thurston, L. P., & Sebastian, J. (1996). Technology and rural special education models and methods for preparing teachers (Report No. RC 020 567). Washington, DC: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 394 768)

U.S. Department of Education. Office of Special Education Programs. (1998). Twentieth annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Education. Office of Special Education Programs. (1999). Twentieth-first annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Westling, D. L., & Whitten, T. M. (1996). Rural special education teachers' plans to continue or leave their teaching positions. Exceptional Children, 62(4), 319-35.

Melina Alexander
Timothy Slocum Ph.D.
Donald Stenhoff
Bryan Davey
Department of Special Education
and Rehabilitation
Utah State University
2865 Old Main Hill
Logan, Utah 84322-2865

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION WITH A SPECIALIZATION IN THE USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION

This federally funded four-year project has added a new specialty in research and exemplary practice to an existing special education doctoral program. It emphasizes skills in a broad span of research methods and their application in a wide range of research, development and evaluation needs. National faculty and geographically remote service sites are incorporated into the program through the use of two-way audio-video telecommunications technology that operates over ordinary phone lines. Through this technology students have the capability to view a wide range of practice problems that occur in service programs and gain a national perspective. This specialization will include general doctoral studies and students will gain practical experience using cutting-edge technologies in teacher preparation. As a result, they will be well prepared to meet the technological advances that will be required of future leaders in the field of special education.

Why have a Specialization in the Use of information Technology in Special Education Teacher Preparation

(This article is adapted from a grant application by Charles L. Salzberg and Timothy A. Slocum)

The 1958 Education of Mentally Retarded Children Act (PL 85-926), identified a shortage of teachers who were well qualified to work effectively with students with disabilities. More than forty years later, this shortage still exists. In 1998, the demand for Special Education teachers to fill vacancies and to replace personnel who were not certified exceeded the number of available teachers by 33,000. Worse, there is no evidence that this problem is abating; the shortage has remained approximately constant for the last 8 years (Department of Education, 1998).

The need for Special Education teachers is particularly acute in rural areas. Rural and other underserved areas tend to have difficulty attracting teachers from the outside and they also tend to be isolated from on-campus teacher education. As a result they often have extremely high levels of teachers who are neither prepared nor certified to be Special Education teachers. Colleges of Education and other teacher preparation organizations must expand their capacity to prepare teachers to fill these positions. This expansion may prove difficult. Recent research indicates that the population of special education faculty who prepare future special education teachers is not expanding, but rather is contracting (Smith & Tyler, 1997). For example, 230 special education doctoral degrees were awarded in 1987, but in 1991 only 183 such degrees were conferred (Smith & Peirce, 1995). This represents a 20% decrease across only four years. There is a great immediate need to expand programs that prepare the special education faculty of the future.

However, preparing more leadership personnel is not enough. In order to address the critical shortage of fully qualified special education teachers in rural and other underserved areas we must develop new ways to make high-quality teacher education programs accessible to potential students in these areas. Students in these areas are too far away to commute to locations that have on-campus programs. Many excellent prospective teachers in these underserved areas have family responsibilities that preclude moving to take advantage of on-campus programs. Distance education is an obvious avenue to address this critical need.

The effectiveness of distance education, not unlike any other educational medium, is primarily dependent upon the skill with which the teacher and/or instructional designer arranges instructional experiences that are appropriate to the learner and the subject matter. In order to design programs that make effective use of these new information technologies, we must understand how specific technologies can mediate the instructional interactions that contribute to meeting a given objective. We must revisit each of the instructional interactions that are important for teacher preparation and understand how various technologies may enhance or subvert its quality. The Utah State University Doctoral Program in Special Education and Rehabilitation with a Specialization in the use of Information Technology in Special Education Teacher Preparation is intended to prepare new professors of education who can develop, implement, and evaluate high quality teacher education programs that use information technologies.

Utah State University Doctoral Program in Special Education and Rehabilitation with a Specialization in the Use of information Technology in Special Education Teacher Preparation

Program Overview

The Utah State University Doctoral Program in Special Education and Rehabilitation with a Specialization in the Use of information Technology in Special Education Teacher Preparation is designed to prepare leadership personnel to use information technologies in training future teachers of students with disabilities. It builds upon our existing doctoral program, which is NCATE/CEC accredited and accredited by the Northwest Accreditation Association. This specialization includes a blend of coursework, internships, and development of professional products. These activities provide students a deeper and more useful understanding of the skills that are necessary in real-world applications.

The program is designed to take advantage of the courses included in the existing doctoral program. The coursework contains a two course sequence on measurement, experimental design, and data analysis from a group research perspective; a two course sequence on single subject design and advanced behavior analysis; and a professional seminar that examines fundamental concepts of science and reviewing literature. Included in this program of study are a variety of courses that will take advantage of the expertise of the Instructional Technology Department. Three of these courses provide the principles and skills for digital audio-video production, use of computer-based authoring tools, web-site design, and CD-ROM development. This sequence is followed by three courses that systematically guide the student in applying these technologies to the development of instructional products for adult learners.

Along with the course work students will complete a rotation of three internships in college teaching and supervision. One of these experiences will be with an on-campus teacher preparation program and the other two will be with distance education programs. A minimum of two semesters of research internships will also be required of the students. These internships are designed to give students an opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in their coursework to the leading issues in the evolving area of special education.

In addition to this program of coursework and internships, students produce four products that demonstrate their competence in important areas of professional practice. These products are (1) a presentation at a national conference, (2) a publication, (3) a review of the literature on an important topic, and (4) a grant proposal. Through this the students will be well prepared to meet the demands of special education leadership positions.

At the end of the specialization program, students will complete dissertations. Students in this specialization are expected to choose dissertation topics related to the use of information technology in teacher preparation programs. Given the students extensive hands on research and internship opportunities, as well as the content knowledge they will gain through their coursework, they will be well prepared to do meaningful research, and assume leadership positions in the field of teacher preparation, through the use of information technology.

Current Status

The project is designed to support 12 doctoral students over the course of its four years of funding. These doctoral students will specialize in the use of information technology to enhance special education teacher preparation. In addition to these12 students, additional students funded by other sources will also participate in the specialization.

In the first year of the project there are five students participating in this program. Each of these students is involved in various research projects. Some of the issues addressed in these projects include distance education, teacher preparation, and curriculum design using technology. Other issues that merge special education and technology will continue to be investigated by the students throughout their doctoral program.

In addition to their special education course work these students are participating in various instructional technology courses. The courses are designed around the use of various media, which are available to enhance education. The students are given the opportunity to have hands on experience in designing and implementing instructional programs. Some of the programs are disseminated using distance educational technology, including mediums such as chat rooms, threaded discussion, voice chat, webct, and two-way video-audio programs.

References

Smith, D.D., & Peirce, T., (1995). The state of special education leadership training and college amd university faculty: What we know and what we don't. Teacher Education and Special Education 18,(3) 156-165

Smith,D.D., & Tyler, N.C. (1997). Special education doctoral students' diversity. OSEP Leadership Conference Monograph

U.S. Department of Education. (1998). Twentieth Annual Report to congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act. Washington D.C.: Author

Carol Adkins
Northern Arizona University
1179 Zircon Corte
Rio Rico, AZ 85648

THE VALUE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN PREPARING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN A RURAL SETTING

This program description focuses on a partnership model for providing an undergraduate special/elementary education dual degree program in a rural setting. The Northern Arizona University/Nogales School-Based Partnership Program is located in the Arizona-Mexico border region, and is based upon a partnership between Nogales Unified School District in Santa Cruz County and Northern Arizona University (NAU). Those interested in designing and implementing a university-school partnership program will be introduced to the following information about this unique program:

- The nature of the school-university partnership
- Program design and implementation
- Integration of the curriculum
- Successes and challenges of starting and continuing a partnership program

Nature of the School-University Partnership

The NAU-Nogales Partnership Program is a preservice teacher education program located in a rural community on the Arizona-Mexico border. This border region has been repeatedly cited as a designated teacher shortage area, and the greatest challenge school districts in this area have is hiring special education teachers who are well versed in the cultural and linguistic diversity of the region.

This program was designed as a five-semester special/elementary education dual degree program to meet the demand of cross-categorical teachers in this border region. The twenty-four students in this program come from the local area – Nogales and Rio Rico – and most are employed as teacher assistants in the Nogales or Santa Cruz County Schools. All students must complete a teacher internship with mentor teachers each semester throughout the program. The internship allows the students to practice what they are learning in their university courses with children in classroom settings. Their mentor teachers provide many valuable experiences from classroom management to teaching lessons. The Nogales Unified School District not only provides internship opportunities for the students in the program, it also provides the physical space to hold classes, and use of district equipment.

NAU resident faculty work closely with district and school personnel, as well as the NAU home campus, to ensure the success of the partnership. Resident faculty become part of the school district team by working daily with district and building administrators, teachers and staff. This strong relationship builds program credibility and solidifies the partnership. In addition to building a strong relationship with school districts, program faculty must work closely with the home campus in order to keep current on college requirements, solve problems and overcome obstacles, and remain a part of the larger campus faculty. In this case, the home campus is approximately 350 miles away, which makes this work challenging, to say the least!

Program Design and Implementation

The first cohort of students began in January 1998 after two years of hard work from Dr. Ray VerVelde and Dr. Peggy VerVelde. They saw a need for this type of program and began working with the Superintendent of Nogales Unified School District to establish a program that would prepare teachers for this rural area. In addition to working with the superintendent, the VerVelde's worked with local schools and with Pima Community College to recruit and prepare students for admission to CEE's Teacher Education Program and NAU. Once students were recruited and admitted to the program, the VerVelde's followed through with the following steps to implement the program:

- Establish settings for school-based program

- Provide inservice training for host schools and mentor teachers
- Identify partnership opportunities within the community
- Establish close working relations with local community college
- Initiate an evaluation component
- Seek funding to support and enrich the program

During the first program, word of its success spread throughout the community and a new group of students expressed interest in completing a similar program. During the last semester of the first program, students were contacted and recruitment for a second cohort began. At the same time, the original faculty made the decision to retire so a new faculty member was hired. During the Summer of 2000, the outgoing faculty assisted the new faculty in the recruitment process, and with the details of running the program, to ensure a smooth transition of new faculty and students. Details of the transition included:

- Meeting the superintendent of Nogales Unified School District
- Meeting school principals
- Meeting students from the first cohort now employed in the local districts
- Sharing information and data from first cohort
- Sharing useful materials
- Spending countless hours on the telephone answering questions!

The second cohort of twenty-four students began their five-semester program in the Fall of 2000.

Integration of the Curriculum

Each semester students are enrolled in at least 15 hours of coursework. Courses are not taught in the traditional manner of one course at a time. Instead, the courses are integrated each semester into a block of coursework that is taught through strands bringing all courses together through those strands. Careful consideration is given when deciding on the block of courses for each semester. Courses that naturally blend well together are placed together, so that there is a good mix of special education and elementary education courses.

Class time is scheduled for late afternoons after the students leave work, and each class session is three hours long. The courses are taught by resident NAU faculty, local school district administrators (currently the special education coordinator for one district), resource specialists, and guest speakers. The district administrator who currently teaches in the program is excited about the opportunity to work with potential future teachers, and to weave local information and experiences into the curriculum. The diverse group of resource specialists and guest speakers bring valuable information and experiences to the program, which enriches the education of the students. This component of the program is crucial when there are only one or two resident faculty members teaching in the program.

Students are required to complete a supervised internship each semester, in addition to the coursework. The internship gives students an opportunity to practice what they are learning as they are learning it, and gives the students a chance to build the necessary skills required by the Arizona Standards for Teacher Certification. These internships take place in an inclusive elementary classroom or a special education setting. Occasionally, internships take place in after-school or Saturday programs at the schools. Each semester, the students are required to complete their internship with a different mentor teacher and preferably at a different school, although changing schools may not always be feasible in such a small geographical area. By the time they complete the program, each student will have had four different internship experiences, with four different teachers, and in both special education and elementary education classes. The NAU faculty has an important role in the success of these internship experiences by traveling among the schools (twelve schools in two districts) to visit the classrooms, mentor teachers and principals. These visits show the students who are in their internship situation that the NAU faculty cares about their success, and it also provides an opportunity for the mentor teachers and principals to visit with and ask questions of the faculty.

The experiential component of the program coupled with the integrated coursework, provides a highly effective program for the students. As the second semester of the second cohort gets under way, we now have first cohort students (who are now teaching) mentoring the second cohort of students in their internships. These mentor teachers understand the program, what is expected of the students, and are providing the kinds of experiences that were meaningful to them when they were in the program. At the same time, the mentor teachers who went through the program are becoming master teachers through this experience, and they are instrumental in forming a community of learning and teaching that is very dynamic.

Successes and Challenges of Starting and Continuing a Partnership Program

Partnership programs in rural areas are unique and very challenging, but with adequate funds and support it can be an extremely rewarding and successful endeavor. When their program began, the VerVelde's were fortunate to receive funding from the Department of Education/Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. This financial support allowed them to provide a very rich and well-rounded experience for the students. The lack of grant funding for the second cohort of students presents many challenges. Students are required to pay for tuition, books and materials, and where the first group had support in attending conferences, the second group pays for those experiences themselves. This makes a big difference in the range of experiences students can have, and also limits the number of students able to afford to attend this type of program.

Between the first and second program, there was a turnover in the superintendent position in the Nogales Unified School District. When this happened, NAU faculty met with the new superintendent to share the successes of the program, what the program had to offer the district, and discuss how the university and the district could continue to work together. This helped solidify the continuation of the program. In this case, the new superintendent was excited about the partnership and was eager to continue as the first cohort had.

Another challenge has been the move from two resident faculty members to one resident faculty member. Partnerships require a great deal of work recruiting students, preparing for and teaching the majority of the courses, arranging internship experiences, supervising student interns, and supervising part-time faculty. To realize the full potential of a partnership program, this requires a minimum of two faculty members. For this program, much of the groundwork was laid in the first program by finding resource people and guest speakers, working with the local community college, and providing inservice training for host schools and mentor teachers. This, along with continued assistance during the first semester of the second program, has allowed the new faculty member to experience a smooth transition into the program. Now, the majority of the work lies in the preparation and teaching of courses, supervision of student interns, maintaining relations with district and school administrators, and the supervision of part-time faculty. Although this is still a great deal of work, with careful planning it is possible to accomplish all of this with one faculty member.

In spite of all the challenges that are faced, the rewards are plentiful. The students in the program are all working hard to balance full-time work, full-time school and family responsibilities. The coursework is very structured and demanding, especially since it is a dual degree program for special and elementary education teachers. Still, the students are focused and enthusiastic about their career choice, and are determined to make it to their dream. The first cohort of students in the partnership program who began in the Spring of 1998 was successful, and each one graduated in May 2000. Today, twenty-four out of the twenty-five students in that first cohort have teaching positions in this area. This success speaks highly of the program and the way in which it fills the need of the area school districts.

Partnership programs are a crucial link for providing school districts with well-trained, experienced, dedicated teachers. When students complete these programs, they approach teaching with a multitude of experiences, and they are well prepared to teach the children in this unique rural area.

References

Association for School College and University Staffing, Inc. (1994). Teacher Supply and Demand in the United States. [Research Report] American Association for Employment in Education (1999). 1999 Job Search Handbook for Education. Evanston, IL.

Delany-Barmann, G., Prater, G. & Minner, S. (1997). Preparing Native American special education teachers: Lessons learned from the Rural Special Education Project. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 16 (4), 10-15.

Prater, G., Savage-David, E., Fuhler, C., Marks, L. & Minner, S. (1997). The preparation of special educators in school-based settings: Program descriptions, lessons learned, and recommendations. The Journal of the International Association of Special Education, 1 (1), 31-44.

Solop, F. I., & Hagen, K. (1999). Special Education Personnel Needs Survey. Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University.

Teacher Supply and Demand in Arizona, Fall 1995 Report. (September, 1995). Tucson: University of Arizona, College of Education.

VerVelde, R. & VerVelde, M. (1999). School-Based teacher education "En La Frontera": Preparing special education teachers on the Arizona-Mexico border. Proceedings of the American Council on Rural Special Education, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 321-327.

Technology

Stephen W. Tonelson, Ed.D
Dept. Child Study Special Education
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23510

Robert A. Gable, Ph.D
Dept. Child Study Special Education
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23510

Cheryl S. Baker, Ph.D.
Dept. Child Study Special Education
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23510

Jane M. Hager, Ph.D
Dean, Darden College of Education
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23510

A DISTANCE LEARNING APPROACH TO REDUCING SHORTAGES IN RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL

On September 18, 1998, Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley spoke to the National Press Club on the subject of "The Challenge for America: A High Quality Teacher in Every Classroom." In that address, Secretary Riley described an educational challenge of monumental proportions, namely, the need to recruit 2.2 million new teachers in the next ten years. Secretary Riley stressed that the growing shortage of classroom teachers promised to go unabated unless we made education our highest national priority. Thus, the challenge to recruit and prepare enough qualified classroom teachers to fill our classrooms has never been as great.

One reason that the supply is falling behind the growing demand for new teachers is that fewer people are choosing to pursue a career in the classroom. At the same time, those who initially prepare to become teachers are abandoning the field at an alarming rate--especially beginning teachers and teachers who lack proper pre-service preparation (e.g., Lauritzen & Friedman, 1993). Figures reported in Education Week (1999) reveal that approximately 6 percent of our nation's teachers desert the profession each year–nearly 30% within five years.

While shortages in the supply of available teachers are widespread, the most critical need is in the area of special education. Data gathered by the Council for Exceptional Children, along with that of the U.S. Department of Education, attest to the scarcity of licensed personnel (Council for Exceptional Children, 1995; Seventeenth Annual Report to Congress, 1995). According to the U.S. Department of Labor, by the year 2005 between 594,161 and 648,131 special educators will be needed as compared to the 358,137 currently teaching students with disabilities (Council for Exceptional Children, 1995). At a time when more adequately trained special educators desperately are needed, the supply of newly prepared special education personnel is declining, across the nation and throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia (e.g., Lauritzen & Friedman, 1993). Indeed, the Office of Special Education of the U.S. Department of Education estimates that as many as 30% of all special educators may be teaching under emergency certification, with little or no preparation in special education (National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education, 1993). This increase in emergency teaching licenses attests to the difficulty school divisions are experiencing in finding and in retaining qualified personnel (Council for Exceptional Children, 1995; Smith-Davis & Billingsley, 1993). Specifically, in Virginia, the shortage of fully endorsed special education teachers is approximately 1200, with the greatest number in the areas of emotional disturbance (ED), learning disabilities (LD), and mental retardation (MR). Many of these unendorsed teachers live in rural areas of the Commonwealth quite distant from colleges and universities where they could enroll in traditional special education classes. Even though many unendorsed teachers have completed some course work required for special education full endorsement, there is a necessity to provide additional high-quality course work in locations convenient to these individuals. Additionally, many teachers have limited financial resources and are unable to afford the necessary college courses leading to full licensure. Thus, the issues addressed by The Commonwealth Special Education Endorsement Program: A Distance Learning Approach (CSEEP) include those of a geographic nature, those associated with program quality, and those associated with cost. Eligible program participants include all special education teachers in the Commonwealth who currently are holding conditional or provisional licensure, desire a high-quality licensure program, and are unable to complete full endorsement because of geographic and/or economic barriers. Each participant must be recommended by his/her school division and must be paired with a fully endorsed mentor teacher provided by the school.

Given the great need for well-trained, fully endorsed special educators, the purposes of The Commonwealth Special Education Endorsement Program: A Distance Learning Approach (CSEEP) were to reduce the number of special education teachers in Virginia teaching on conditional or provisional licenses and to increase the number of high quality, fully endorsed special education teachers. To accomplish these tasks, CSEEP seeks:

1) To identify special education teachers who currently are teaching with provisional or conditional licensure.

2) To utilize satellite interactive technology and electronic communication to provide high quality special education courses to identified individuals throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

3) To establish a collaborative relationship among the public and private schools and school systems in the Commonwealth, the Virginia Department of Education, and Old Dominion University in order to facilitate full endorsement for all special education teachers.

4) To integrate content knowledge, technology standards, instructional strategies, and Virginia Standards of Learning throughout the course work.

5) To conduct rigorous evaluation of all components of the project including curriculum design, course content, teacher application, classroom delivery, and overall success in providing full endorsement for special education teachers in Virginia.

As stated, barriers to higher education are two-fold— geographic, especially for those individuals living in rural areas away from institutions of higher education, and financial. To eliminate geographical barriers, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia approved TELETECHNET, a distance learning partnership among Old Dominion University (ODU), the Virginia Community College system, the military, and businesses to offer four year undergraduate and graduate programs to residents throughout the Commonwealth. Distance learning opportunities through TELETECHNET provide ready access to instruction for students who live in remote areas as well as non-traditional students in urban areas, thus eliminating geographic barriers to gaining college degrees and professional licensure. Additionally, with the support of grant funds from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), CSEEP has been able to reduce the financial burden of completing full licensure for special education teachers in the Commonwealth.

Specifically, through existing technology, ODU broadcasts all courses necessary for full endorsement in mild disabilities, including Emotional/Behavioral Disorders, Learning Disabilities, and Mental Retardation. Distance learning courses, via state-of-the-art televised satellite broadcast, are received by 36 sites across the Commonwealth, 31 of which are community college campuses. Any special education teacher, indeed any teacher, whether fully endorsed or not, is able to travel a short distance (60 miles or less) to a satellite reception site and enroll in high-quality special education course work leading to full licensure and/or a Master's Degree in Education with emphasis in Special Education. Over the period of the grant, 10-12 courses per year have been offered by ODU to each of the sites across Virginia. Each of these courses addresses one or more VDOE licensure competencies and is designed to be responsive to the needs of the regional special education coordinators. With the support of the Local Education Agencies, the VDOE, and CSEEP staff, students are able to select specific courses needed for full licensure or for additional endorsements. Funding to reimburse CSEEP participants for 80% of the course costs is provided through the VDOE for identified teachers who enroll and successfully complete the appropriate courses. Thus, the reimbursement eliminates the financial burden of obtaining full endorsement and the multiple distance learning sites alleviate the geographic obstacles associated with matriculation in high-quality special education endorsement courses.

The courses offered by CSEEP via TELETECHNET are taught in one of four studio classrooms on the ODU campus. The faculty teaches to multiple classrooms and students at distant sites, who are linked to the instructor via voice microphone and thereby can participate in discussions and seek clarification on instruction. Students also have access to faculty by means of telephone 800 lines, voice mail, and e-mail at each training site. Students at the distance learning sites receive the same courses, use the same syllabi, complete the same assignments and examinations as students sitting in the classrooms on the ODU campus. Exams are proctored by site directors who are full-time ODU employees at each of the 36 sites. Course projects and exams are sent by Federal Express to ODU for grading by course instructors and then returned using the same carrier. In the event of inclement weather, students have access to taped programs at each of the sites. In order to meet the needs of working teachers, courses are offered in the late afternoon or early evening Monday through Friday, Saturday morning and early afternoon, and Sunday afternoons. Flexible course offerings are available during the summer sessions.

Results

In order to reduce the numbers of Special Education teachers in the Commonwealth who hold conditional or provisional licensure and to assure the partners associated with CSEEP that we are providing quality course work, much data has been collected. The results of the data analyses have allowed us to evaluate CSEEP's effectiveness and to improve the program. Our goals have always been to enhance the preparation of special education teachers, the transition of these teachers into the classroom, the support of these teachers through full licensure, and the retention of these teachers.

Data has been collected from program participants and from program mentors. The instruments used to collect the data all reflect "best practices" in special education. Six major areas of "best practices" were assessed. These areas included: assessment, preparation and planning, instruction, teaching specific content, classroom management, and collaboration. All results, in all areas, from both groups, have been extremely positive. Specifically, an initial pretest was given to all participants prior to CSEEP participation and a post test was given to these same participants after they completed their last course for full licensure. These instruments measured the perceived importance of the "best practices" and the degree to which training was needed in order to implement these "best practices" into the classroom. Using paired sample t-tests, the pretest/post test data (n=101) indicate that: 1) CSEEP participants are much more aware of the importance of most of these practices and 2) with the completion of CSEEP, need much less training in order to effectively implement these practices into the classroom (statistically significant $p \leq .05$). Specifically, 16 of the 35 pairs on the importance scale had a significantly higher post test rating. Greatest gains with regard to importance addressed assessment, collaboration, classroom management, and teaching specific content (i.e., technology, and integrated instruction). Results from the training scale indicated that 33 of the 35 pairs were rated significantly higher on the post test. Greatest gains in reducing training needs also include assessment, collaboration, classroom management, and teaching specific content (i.e., mathematics, language arts, and reading).

Additional data indicate that the CSEEP participants actually taught more effectively each semester they were enrolled in CSEEP course work (n=101). These data were collected through the use of systematic classroom observations of the teacher participants by their mentors and were analyzed through observation of the use of "best practices" in special education (statistically significant $p \leq .05$). Again, paired sample t-tests were conducted in order to determine whether or not mentor observation ratings were statistically significant different over time, specifically between the first observation and third observation of each semester. Prior to conducting the paired sample t-tests, the mean for each of the six major aggregate sections—assessment, preparation and planning, instruction, teaching specific content, classroom management, and collaboration of activities was computed. For all but one of the six major aggregate sections, there was a statistically significant increase between the first mentor observations and the third mentor observations. All mentor observations increased between the first and third observation, thereby indicating more positive observation evaluations.

Data were also collected with regard to the classroom placement of CSEEP participant finishers (n=75). Specifically, these data indicate that 93% of CSEEP finishers currently are fully licensed and teaching in their specialty areas. These data also indicate that 92% of the finishers stated that CSEEP helped them to obtain full licensure and 95% stated that course work provided through CSEEP increased their ability to provide effective classroom instruction. Finally, data indicate that 89% stated that the mentor program provided appropriate support throughout the CSEEP experience and, perhaps most important, 99% of the finishers indicated that the completion of their licensure program through CSEEP increased the likelihood that they would remain in the field of education.

In addition to assessing the individuals who had completed their endorsement requirements successfully, we attempted to contact 45 individuals who had discontinued course work with CSEEP. It was our assumption that these individuals might be less positive than those individuals who had completed licensure. As might be expected, only 11 individuals could be contacted. Thirteen individuals had moved and did not have updated phone numbers and twenty one individuals were left several messages and did not return our calls. Of the eleven individuals we were able to contact, all believed that CSEEP was responsive to their needs. Nine indicated that the grant staff was accessible and ten stated that they were satisfied with the distance learning sites and with distance learning as implemented by Old Dominion University. Additionally, all eleven of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the quality and content of instruction and all found the courses to be useful. Last, although only six of the eleven respondents believed the mentor component of CSEEP to be beneficial, all eleven were satisfied with their grant experience.

These results indicate that the Commonwealth Special Education Endorsement Program: A Distance Learning Approach has been extremely successful with regard to accomplishing its major purposes. As stated previously, the purposes of CSEEP were to reduce the number of special education teachers in Virginia teaching on conditional or provisional licenses and to increase the number of high quality, fully endorsed special education teachers in the Commonwealth. To this date over 202 special education teachers in the Commonwealth of Virginia have completed full licensure through course work offered through CSEEP. The data indicate that these teachers, without exception, have been provided with a high quality teacher training program at a location near their home or their school, at minimal cost, and with the support of in-school mentor teachers. The data also indicate that students with special needs, including emotional/behavioral disorders, learning disabilities, or mental retardation, throughout Virginia, are significantly more likely to receive a quality education because of the efforts of the CSEEP partnership.

References

Council for Exceptional Children. (1995). Special Education Today, 1, Reston, VA.

Education Week. (1999). 18 (28)

Lauritzen, P. & Friedman, S.J. (1993). Meeting the supply/demand requirements of IDEA. Teacher Education and Special Education, 16, 221-229.

National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education. (1993). Who will teach? Who will serve? A Report to the Field by the Working Forum on National Personnel Agenda for Special Education and Related Services. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Seventeenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act . (1995). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Smith-Davis, J. & Billingsley, B. (1993). The supply/demand puzzle. Teacher Education and Special Education, 16, 205-220.

Melina Alexander
Benjamin Lignugaris/Kraft, Ph.D.
Bryan Davey
Donald Stenhoff
Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation
Utah State University
2865 Old Main Hill
Logan, Utah 84322-2865

THE APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATED INTO CURRICULUM DESIGN CLASSES

This poster presents technology applications integrated into a curriculum class for preservice teachers. The poster will include the general steps in an individualized curriculum analysis process and how technology applications may be integrated into the various steps in the process. Examples of student projects will be presented that include a description of the instructional materials (eg., internet resources, software, curriculum kits) to teach the knowledge and skills in curricular domain, sample lessons using that material, and a technology based management system. This project is currently in its initial stages. Additional information and data will be presented at the ACRES conference.

Gloria M. Palma
North Carolina A & T State University
312 Village Ln
Greensboro, NC 27409

DISTANCE LEARNING AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL TOOL

Introduction

Distance learning refers to training approaches characterized by the separation of instructor and students (Keegan, 1990). It offers a novel approach in delivering personnel preparation programs, and the capability of linking universities with rural areas (Knapczk, 1993). Studies indicate that various factors act as barriers to rural teachers' participations in traditional on-campus training programs (Condon, et.al., 1989). These factors include, but are not restricted, to time-related constraints, travel costs, and inconvenient course times (Miller, 1989).

Rural states have often experienced difficulty preparing special education and related personnel to meet the needs of individuals with special needs in the public schools (Anderson, 1989). Most of these states employ various types of distance learning to deliver course work to students in rural areas, thus reducing the barriers of cost and time that have negatively affected access to higher education programs by students living in rural areas (Artesani, et.al., 1998). Distance learning could reduce the need to commute to a central training site.

This presentation describes the use of interactive video as an instructional tool in delivering a graduate course in adapted physical activity program for individuals with special needs. The program was sponsored and supported by a grant from the Office of Special Education Programs, US Department of Education. Specifically, the following areas are described: the purpose and description of the course, the participants, student assessments, and recommendations.

Purpose and description of the course

The course is entitled "Program Development in Adapted Physical Activity." It is a three-credit graduate course and was developed as one of the core curricular areas in the master's degree track in adapted physical activity. The purpose of the course is to train students in developing data-based physical activity programs for individuals with special needs in all settings, with emphasis in rural areas. Consequently, students were expected to exhibit exit competencies in quality program planning, with emphasis on assessment and data collection. In addition, the course provided examination of various curricular models, pedagogical approaches, best practices, and their selective application to the development of adapted physical activity programs for individuals with special needs. The emphasis was on a non-categorical approach to programming and implementation.

The class met once a week for two hours and forty five minutes (2:45 minutes) for one semester. It was offered in the evening to accommodate the schedule of non-traditional students.

Student-participants in the course

The student-participants in the course were a cohort of 16 public school teachers in a rural county in North Carolina. The teacher-participants matriculated for the course to fulfill part of the academic requirements in the completion of their master's degree program in physical education. The participants were teaching at the middle and secondary school levels, and had students with special needs in their mainstreamed physical activity classes

Delivery and assessment of the course

Course instructions were delivered to the participants through interactive video. The instructor conducted class from a sending site 200 miles away from the students and receiving site. Various teaching styles and forms of technology were selectively employed to deliver instruction effectively. Assignments, questions and answers, individual projects, student conferences, and communications were conducted through the use of electronic mail, fax machine, telephone, and post office mail service. The instructor relied heavily on group projects, hands-on experience, and individual presentations in class. The students were often assigned to apply concepts and theories to their mainstreamed classes in the public schools. A typical class session involved 50 percent of class time devoted to discussions and exchange of views about the students' experiential learning.

A qualitative assessment of the course was conducted ten weeks after the course ended. The purpose of the assessment was to determine how the participants felt about their experience with interactive video. The instructor adopted the method used by Shaeffer and Shaeffer (1993) in obtaining the participants' opinions about the various aspects of their interactive video experience. An assessment form was mailed to the participants together with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the assessment. A follow-up letter was mailed three weeks after. Both letters explained the confidentiality of responses and the importance of the participants' input to the improvement of course delivery in the future. A self-addressed stamped envelope accompanied the letters.

The participants were asked to respond to open-ended statements focusing on three areas: the instructor, the course, and the interactive video instructional mode. Of the 16 participants, 56 percent (n=9) responded. The responses were analyzed and classified based upon their similarity in context. When asked what they liked most about the instructor's teaching strategy, nearly 56 percent (n=5) liked it when the instructor allowed them to share their personal teaching examples, and when the instructor shared her teaching experiences as well. While 44 percent (n=4) liked it when the instructor gave the class enough time to understand some learning materials better, 67 percent (n=6) thought that allowing them to work in groups was good.

When asked what things they did not like in the instructor's teaching method, 78 percent (n=7) did not like it when the instructor kept her head down and stayed out of the students' view. At least 33 percent (n=3) did not like it when the instructor went over the same material in consecutive class settings, while 22 percent (n=2) did not respond to the statement.

Nearly all of the respondents, n=8, (89%) liked the course because they were able to identify its context and activities with their special need students. About 35 percent (n=3) thought they learned new skills in teaching their mainstreamed classes. The respondents, n=8, (89%) did not have a response to what they liked least in the course, except for one respondent (11%) who said he/she did not like the course because of the delay he/she experienced in receiving feedback on his/her assignments. All respondents said they liked interactive video-based instruction because it kept them from having to drive three to four hours to class. When asked what they liked least about the interactive video, the respondents said they did not like the non-personal feeling, the lack of face to face interaction, and the cancellation of classes due to technical problems. Nearly all of the respondents, n=8, (89%) said they would take a course through interactive video again.

Discussion/recommendation

The assessment results showed that nearly all of the respondents were fairly satisfied with both the course content and delivery components of the interactive video instruction. Problems occurred during the instructional process which include technical difficulties (no sound, no picture, and faulty transmission), information lost in the mail, and delayed mail delivery.

In spite of these problems, the advantages of distance learning seem to outweigh the disadvantages.

The following suggestions are recommended to facilitate an efficient interactive video instruction:

- Course mapping is essential and must be completed in the pre-planning period.
- The instructor and students should know how to operate the various technical machines involved in the process.
- Pacing of instruction is very important to allow time for hands-on activities, class discussions, group dynamics, and other activities.
- The number of class meetings should have an allowance for days when technical problems occur and class sessions are cancelled.
- The instructor should always look at the students on the screen and should refrain from staying out of students' sight.
- Students should be seated within the view of the camera so the instructor could see them.

- Messages and assignments sent through e-mail may not be received in time. It is necessary to have an alternative routing system
- The instructor should meet the students face-to-face at least twice during the whole learning period.
- Lengthy lectures should be avoided.
- There should be alternatives in case teaching aids such as powerpoint and overhead projector fail to function.

Summary

Distance learning has become a popular instructional tool among educators from all levels and types of institutions nationwide. It has successfully managed to reduce the barriers of time, cost, and distance that impede access to higher education programs by students, especially those in the rural areas. The use of interactive video, the focus of this presentation and similar to other forms of distance learning, has advantages and disadvantages. However, studies indicate that the advantages of teaching through this approach far outweigh the disadvantages.

Jennifer Grisham-Brown
University of Kentucky
315 Funkhouser Building
Department of Family Studies
Lexington, KY 40506-0054

Belva C. Collins
University of Kentucky
Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling
229 Taylor Education Building
Lexington, KY 40506-0001

John W. Schuster
University of Kentucky
Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling
229 Taylor Education Building
Lexington, KY 40506-0001

MEASURING INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENT BEHAVIORS IN DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES

Background

Distance education is widely used in university settings to train college students in a variety of professions including nursing (Latchem & Rapley, 1992), physical therapy (English, Harrison, & Hurt, 1992) and special education (Collins, 1997). Distance education formats that have been used to deliver instruction to students include satellite, interactive video and web based instruction (Barker, 1992). The Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling (EDSRC) has been teaching graduate coursework via distance education options (primarily satellite and interactive video) since 1989. Graduate programs in Moderate/Severe Disabilities (MSD), Early Childhood Special Education (EDSRC), Special Education Technology and Rehabilitation Counseling are offered. In addition, in 1998, EDSRC was awarded a leadership grant to train doctoral students how to teach coursework via various distance education formats. Finally, EDSRC received a position for an endowed chair with an emphasis in technology in 1999. Likewise, the Department of Family Studies (FAM) has increased its emphasis on providing undergraduate and graduate coursework through various distance education formats. Faculty from FAM and EDSRC have worked together since 1998 to deliver an interdisciplinary certification program in early childhood education via distance education technologies. With this recent emphasis on preparing students via distance education, EDSRC and FAM faculty have developed an interest in training course instructors to use effective instructional practices to engage distance education students in coursework. This has been the basis of EDSRC and FAM faculty research and publications, including guidelines for effective delivery (Collins & Grisham-Brown, in press).

Throughout their years of teaching distance education courses (i.e. 24 years of combined teaching), the authors have observed that faculty who are new to distance education delivery are overwhelmed with the amount of time it takes to prepare for a course. In addition, there is a tendency to think that lecture formats often used for campus-based courses can be used in distance education formats. When instruction is delivered in that manner, it is not uncommon to observe distance education students turn from the camera and talk to fellow students, go to sleep, read magazines or otherwise not participate in class. It should be noted that these behaviors are observed during interactive video classes that are two-way video, meaning that the instructor and student can see one another. In a satellite delivery situation, the instructor would be totally unaware of the students' behavior and hope for the best. In summary, there is increased emphasis on distance education delivery and concern that distance education students may not be engaged in learning under certain types of instruction.

Because distance education technologies have emerged as recommended practices for offering coursework and because of the instructional concerns mentioned above, research is required to determine the best teaching practices needed to assure that distance education students receive the same quality education as on-campus students. In response to this need, the authors developed a protocol for measuring effective distance education teacher behaviors and using it to train novice distance education faculty to engage in these behaviors. In the future, they intend to use the protocol to evaluate the effects of distance education teacher behaviors on and off-campus student behavior. The purposes of this paper are to (a) discuss a protocol for evaluating instructor's teaching during distance education courses; (b) discuss a protocol for evaluating students' attending and on/off-task behaviors during distance education courses; and (d) present an intervention package for training novice instructors how to implement effective teaching strategies with the instrumentation.

Instrumentation Development

The authors desired to develop instrumentation that eventually could be used to evaluate the effects of distance education teaching behaviors on students' attending and on/off task behavior. Specifically, they want to eventually answer the following research questions with this instrumentation: (a) Will the teaching behavior of novice distance education instructors improve following training and feedback in effective distance education delivery strategies?; and (b) Will student engagement increase as effective distance education instructional practices are applied during interactive video classes? Engagement was defined as (a) students looking at the instructor, (b) students talking with other students only at appropriate times (e.g., during a small group activity), (c) students taking notes about content, (d) students dialoguing with instructor or student at another site so that the entire class can hear and (e) the absence of other behaviors that would disrupt learning (e.g., talking, leaving room, playing with their children). In order to eventually investigate these issues, the following steps were taken.

First, the authors reviewed the literature to determine (a) recommended teacher behaviors for providing instruction in distance education courses; and (b) student behaviors indicative of active learning. Since distance education technologies have been used across a wide variety of professions, the literature review encompassed areas other than just education (e.g., medicine, business, etc.). Second, they developed data collection instruments for measuring (a) teacher behaviors that are indicative of effective distance education instruction; and (b) student engagement during distance education classes. For the teacher scoring protocol, the following general categories of behaviors were identified: (a) plans and designs instruction; (b) demonstrates knowledge of content; (c) creates learning climate; and (d) assesses and provides feedback. Within each of these broad categories were discrete teaching behaviors that one would expect to observe at some point throughout a distance education class. For example, under *plans and designs instruction*, the authors looked for graphics that were easily viewed by distance education sites (e.g., clear font, 24-36 font, horizontal). In *demonstrates knowledge of content* , the authors determined whether instructors clearly presented material and related coursework to real life experiences. With regard to *creating learning climate,* the authors determined if the instructor gave opportunities for students to work in small groups, and used techniques to keep students on track. Finally, the authors determined if instructors *assessed and provided feedback* by giving in-class quizzes and allowing opportunities for self-assessment. As well as these broad categories and discrete teaching behaviors, the authors developed an interval recording data sheet to evaluate specific behaviors for *implementing and managing instruction*. Some of these teacher behaviors included addressing on and off-campus students by name or site, providing regional examples, and making eye contact with on and off-campus students. These were measured during a 3 min interval using a partial interval system. The recorder watched the teacher for an entire 3 min interval and recorded if the behavior occurred at any point during the interval.

The student recording system was a 30 sec. whole interval recording system. The instrument provided the capacity to observe up to 6 students at a time. Throughout the entire interval, the recorder observed a student and at the end recorded if the student was on or off task and what type of instruction was occurring (i.e., student led or teacher led). As well, if the student was off task, the teacher recorded the specific off-task behavior observed (i.e., talking to others, turning away from camera or leaving room, and engaging in unrelated activity).

After the instruments were developed, the authors gained acceptable reliability on each instrument amongst themselves. Acceptable reliability was considered 80% or above. Throughout this process, changes were made to the instruments and teacher behaviors were clarified. Following this step, the authors trained five graduate students to collect data on teacher behaviors. To validate the instruments, the students practiced using the instruments by recording teacher behaviors from videotapes of distance education courses previously taught by the second author.

The last step of this process was to use the instruments to develop a training package that can be used to train novice distance education instructors how to effectively teach in distance education courses. This package includes the following features: (a) copies of articles on effectively teaching in distance education courses; (b) explanation of the instruments along with an expansion of the definition of each teacher behavior; and (c) feedback from the authors on teacher behaviors using the instrument as a basis of discussion of videotapes of novice teachers' classes. Presently, the authors have recruited three novice teachers for whom they will begin collecting baseline data. A multiple baseline design will be used to assess the effects of the intervention on increasing appropriate teaching strategies and on the behaviors of the students who are taking the courses via distance education formats. The authors hypothesize that effective distance education instruction will increase in novice instructors and will result in improved on-task behavior of distance education students. These findings will have implications for training faculty who will teach in this format.

Contributions

The findings from this research will contribute to the professional knowledge about how to provide effective instruction to distance education students. With the increased number of courses offered through distance education formats, the information will be particularly useful to faculty who desire to provide distance education instruction equal to that provided to on-campus students. The instrumentation from this study will be used for several purposes. First, it can be used in developing training programs for doctoral level students. Although those students may understand how to operate the technology associated with distance education, it is equally important that they understand how to teach in that format. Also, it could be used as a self-assessment for novice distance education instructors to improve their teaching. The authors hope to use the data to support the need for future personnel preparation and field initiated research grants in distance education. Particularly, this may serve as one example of the type of research that doctoral students may conduct relative to distance education.

References

Barker, B. O. (1992). The distance education handbook: An administrator's guide for rual and remote schools. Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Collins, B. C. (1997). Training Rural Education in Kentucky through Distance Learning: A model with follow-up data. Teacher Education and Special Education, 20, 234-248.

Collins, B. C. & Grisham-Brown, J. L. (in press). Guidelines for distance learning content delivery. In B. L. Ludlow & F. Spooner (Eds), Distance education in special education: Personnel preparation applications. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

English, T., Harrison, A. L., & Hart, A. L. (1998). A distance learning model in a physical therapy curriculum. Journal of Allied Health, 27, 228-232.

Latchem, C., & Rapley, P. (1992). Trial by satellite: Videoconferencing for continuing education for rural area nurses. Distance Education, 12, 118-130.

Carole A. Milner
Assistant Professor
Department of Special Education
Minnesota State University, Mankato
313 Armstrong Hall
Mankato. MN 56001

MENTOR2MENTOR:
PEER MENTORING OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS USING TECHNOLOGY

Individuals graduating from teacher education programs can be expected to have completed teacher education programs progressing from knowledge of content areas to methods of teaching courses, eventually culminating their formal educations with a capstone experience of supervised student teaching experience in their area of preparation. Due to shortages, this background cannot be assumed for all individuals entering the field of special education teaching. During the 2000-2001 school year in Minnesota, 656 variances were unlicensed individuals employed to staff classrooms for students with disabilities (Minnesota Children, Families & Learning, 2000). In order to qualify for a variance, the applicant must have completed a teacher preparation program, although not in special education. Therefore, when individuals begin teaching with variances they may not know basic information such as terminology and definitions specific to special education, eligibility criteria, legal constraints and requirements, or characteristics of the students they are charged with teaching.

In order to remain eligible for additional years under the variance, the unlicensed special education teacher must complete six quarter hours (or four semester hours) per school year toward full licensure (Minnesota Statutes, 2000). If their special education teacher preparation program requires introductory classes in special education, they may teach for more than a year before taking advanced courses in areas such as assessment and teaching methods while still meeting the state requirements to maintain their variance eligibility.

One way to assist special education teachers with variances in providing appropriate services to students is to develop a mentoring support system. Mentoring allows inexperienced individuals to benefit from the knowledge and experience of experienced individuals providing information, support and advice (Bendixon-Noe, 1997). Bainer & Didham (1994) found that beginning teachers with mentors spent more time discussing teaching than beginning teachers without mentors. Also, a critical factor in retaining special education teachers is the successful completion of the first year of teachings (Billingsley, 1993; Harris & Associates, Inc., 1991). Teachers with variances, lacking the preservice education they should have, face a higher risk of not having a successful first year of teaching. Effective mentoring has been shown to contribute to the success of the first year teaching and the future practice of the novice teacher (Whitaker, 2000). Establishing mentoring connections for the special education teachers with variance becomes more important as it may increase the possibility that they will continue as special educators.

Teachers of general education classrooms can develop mentoring relationships with peers within their buildings but this may not be possible for special education teachers. In small rural schools, the special education teacher with a variance may be the only special education teacher in the building. Teachers in this situation can obtain assistance from general education teachers to learn about building or district procedures, general teaching issues, and receive moral support but their access to veteran special education teachers with knowledge of special education issues and experience teaching students with special needs may be extremely limited. White (1995) reported that almost half of Kentucky's beginning special education teachers were not paired with special education teachers as mentors. His research found that individuals assigned special education teachers as mentors viewed the mentoring experience as more beneficial than individuals with general education teachers as mentors.

One way to meet the needs of the special educators in rural settings requiring mentoring or additional education is through the use of communication technology. Technology has been used to deliver distance learning courses and can be used to assist teachers in rural areas. In fact, the National Center of Education Statistics (1997-98) reported that in the 1997-98 school year, 79% of all four year public postsecondary institutions provided distance education courses, showing an increase of 17% since the fall of 1995. Distance education and increased availability of Internet access allows individuals who work and reside in geographically isolated or distant sites to seek college educations. Technology methods used in presenting course content can also provide a way to meet the needs of rural or isolated special education teachers. Asynchronous communication, in the form of email and bulletin boards (UseNet), was used in a program to prepare special educators to teach students with low incidence disabilities (Spooner, Agran, Spooner, & Kiefer-O'Donnell, 2000). UseNet allowed students to discuss course content and interact with each other and the course instructors without extensive travel or long distance charges.

"E-mentoring, ...the merger of mentoring with electronic communications... termed telementoring, cybermentoring, or virtual mentoring" has also been used in the preparation of individuals entering many professionals (Single & Muller, 1999, p. 1). MentorNet was established to match female engineering students with mentors to communicate using email. The e-mentors and their mentored partners discussed self-selected topics related to their chosen professions and discussion topics suggestions posed by MentorNet (Single & Muller, 2000). The MentorNet program established 550 mentor-protégé matches, with 510 of the original matches still communicating at the end of the program for a continuous participation rate of 93 percent. The high rate of participation supports the supposition that the experience was valuable to the mentoring pairs.

There have been other technology based programs used to connect individuals in the teaching profession. East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania established user groups to connect student teachers and a few experienced teachers who were not involved in supervising the students to offer support though the student teaching experience (Smeaton & Waters, 2000). The user groups provided a venue to share experiences and frustrations with others in the same situation while benefiting from mentoring from experienced teachers. Even though they were isolated geographically, they were able to access peer, personal and professional support.

E-mentoring has many practical advantages for rural and urban special education teachers. Distance and time does not have to interfere with opportunities to interact. No actual shared meeting time must be established, allowing for more flexible communication patterns without regard to environmental constraints. Other advantages of e-mentoring include ease in sending brief, informal messages, and flexibility in retrieving messages from any computer with internet access (Spooner, Spooner, Algozzine, & Jordan, 1998).

The existence of 656 unlicensed special education teachers in Minnesota classrooms makes it imperative that a system be established to facilitate opportunities for them to interact with other, more experienced special education teachers working with similar students under the same state requirements. A listserv, Mentor2Mentor (M2M-L), was established to provide special education teachers of Minnesota to connect, share information, and mutual support. The listserv, hosted by the Minnesota State University, Mankato servers, provides a vehicle for Minnesota special educators to pose and respond to questions posted by subscribers.

The basic function of a listserv is to accept email messages from individuals who have chosen to join and send copies of the message to all other members of the listserv. As an unmoderated listserv, messages sent to M2M-L are forwarded to all members within seconds of receipt by the server. This feature of the listserv, along with the potentially unsecured nature of email communication and the public nature of listserv interaction, does engender concerns with confidentially. For this reason, the welcome letter sent by the server to new subscribers contains the following statement to caution members.

> Remember that sending an email to a listserv is like posting the message on a bulletin board in the middle of a busy city... anyone might be able to read it. So, when discussing problems or concerns NEVER use a student's name or specific information that would allow someone else to identify the student. Email sent through a listserv should be consider public communication, not private communication.
>
> Although this listserv is intended for use by special educators of Minnesota, there is no way to be 100% positive that only educators are enrolled....A listserv is only as valuable as the members make it. This is an unmoderated listserv which means everything you send will be sent to everyone without censoring. Listservs that are successful are those with members who want to be helpful, communicate in a courteous manner, and remember that there are people at the other end of the line reading and writing the email messages.

Another way of establishing a distance mentoring system considered was the use of a bulletin board. However, since the Mentor2Mentor program does not have a schedule or required participation as there is with college courses using electronic bulletin boards, participant were likely to only access the bulletin board when they had a need and would be less likely to be available to mentor others. Bulletin board systems require individuals to actively access the listing so a listserv was viewed as having more potential for success as messages would be sent to the listserv members automatically. Members only have to check their email to receive Mentor2Mentor messages from other members.

One of the considerations in using the listserv as the vehicle for mentoring is that individuals are not specified as mentors and protégé. All members assume the role according to their needs and others need. Case studies have shown that mentoring relationships, which begin with the mentor as the expert in a parental or advisory role, evolves into a more equal role in which each individual performs as a mentor the other, providing mutual beneficial (Fairbanks, Freedman, & Kahn, 2000; Stanulis & Weaver, 1998). However, in the relationships studied, all individuals were assigned as a specific role as mentor or protégé. The relationships evolve to a more equal standing over time but M2M-L requires members to bypass the early evolution of the relationship. For the listserv to be effective, there must be a belief that all individuals involved in the listserv are there to receive and provide assistance without criticism or recrimination under the informal mentoring relationship. Research that has found more informal unscheduled contacts between mentor s and the beginning teacher have been viewed by the participants as more effective than more formal meetings lends support to the premise of this mentoring support system (Huffman & Leak, 1986). Whether this informal system of linking individuals with shared concerns, without specifying role as mentor or mentored, will be helpful to the unlicensed special education teachers remains to be seen.

There are technology related challenges in using a listserv to provide mentoring. Other e-mentoring programs experienced difficulties when members lost each other's addresses, although this is a less of a problem with a listserv than direct email e-mentoring as all individuals only need to receive one email from anyone in the group to recover the address information. However, all users must have access to a computer with an internet connection, be able to use an email program, have adequate typing skill to keep the task from becoming too laborious, and be able to wait for an answer as there is always a lapse from minutes to days between the time a request is sent and an answer is received. Also, a response to each question is not guaranteed because the listserv system of sending each message out to every member, providing more than one expert to call upon, instead of to a specific individual, reduces individual responsibility to reply. Users who do not receive a response must be persistent and follow-up with additional questions or information if they do not receive a helpful reply.

The first special education teachers subscribed to the listserv were individuals completing a graduate level survey course of mild disabilities. Due to difficulty accessing server services, the listserv was not activated until the last week of the semester. Students had been required to email a response to course reading material each week to the professor, but had not enrolled on a listserv. They had practice in using email but not in interacting with peers using a listserv. To open the listserv to teachers throughout the state, email messages containing information about the purpose and procedure needed to subscribe to the listserv were sent to the special education directors in Minnesota. During the intervening Christmas vacation, two to five individuals per week requested listserv enrollment. However, there were no messages exchanged through the listserv even after the vacation period ended. Eventually, after two subscribers wrote directly to the list-owner address, the following message was sent to all members through the listserv:

> Two new members of this listserv sent me emails asking why they had not received any messages from the listserv. Everyone should have received an initial "Welcome" letter that is automatically generated by the computer. I also forwarded an email about theatre tickets. I am now wondering is there is a problem with the listserv functions.....did these messages reach you? Since I can't ask people to write back if they haven't received the messages then I'll have to ask you to write to the listserv if you HAVE received a message. We (I hope) will all be flooded with the confirmations but maybe all of you may feel more comfortable writing since you will see the success!
>
> I held back from writing because I want this listserv to help you...I won't list a question about special education needs because it would be contrived and not a "real" question. I will ask, What do you want to talk about is there some information you would find helpful about a case conference scheduled soon... Do

> you need to know how someone else has handled a behavior situation you are dealing with now? ... Are you wondering about the best way to teach a child how to distinguish between q and p? ....

Confirmations of receipt of the email starting arriving the next day. The first message from a special education teacher posing a question to listserv members started with:

> "It is interesting, isn't it? Like going to our first 'real' dance in middle school, everyone wants to be there but nobody wants to be out on the dance floor for fear of looking foolish. Well, I've long believed there is no such thing as a foolish question and since Dr. Milner has kindly started the music, I'll take a risk and step out onto the floor" (email received from M2M-L, Jan. 25, 2001).

After the first member generated request for information, answers and additional questioned followed. Questions ranged from requests for recommendations for curriculum supporting software, assessment concerns of tests selection and calculation of the Mean Length of Communication Unit, to implementation of state required progress measures, profiles of learning, for students removed from the general education curriculum.

As the knowledge of the availability of the listserv grows and the number of members subscribed to the listserv continues to increase, access to information for each individual will also increase. The benefits of the listserv e-mentoring system could be far-reaching. Seventy percent of the variances issued by Minnesota were for teaching students with mild disabilities of Specific Learning Disabilities and Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders. If a conservative case load average of twenty is assumed, then the education of more than nine thousand students with mild disabilities rests in the hands of well-meaning, unprepared teachers. Therefore, any support and information that will improve the teaching practices of these teachers will also improve the quality of education a tremendous number of students.

References

Bainer, D. L. & Didham, C. (1994). Mentoring and other support behaviors in elementary schools. Journal of Educational Research, 87, 4, 240-247.

Bendixon-Noe, M. & Giebelhaus, C. (1997). Mentoring: Help or hindrance? Mid-Western Educational Researcher, 10, 4, 20-23.

Billingsley, B. S. (1993). Teacher retention and attrition in special and general education: A critical review of the literature. The Journal of Special Education, 27, 137-174.

Fairbanks, C. M., Freedman, D., & Kahn, C. (2000). The Role of Effective Mentors in Learning to Teach. Journal of Teacher Education, 51,2, 102-113.

Harris, L., & Associates, Inc. (1991). The Metropolitan Life survey of the American teacher, 1991: The first year: New teacher's expectations and ideals. New York: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 354 224)

Huffman, G., & Leak, S. (1986). Beginning teacher's perceptions of mentors. Journal of Teacher Education, 37, 1, 22-25.

Minnesota Children, Families & Learning. (2000). Minnesota Variance Summary. Minneapolis: Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning.

Minnesota Statutes Personnel Variances, 2000, § 8710.1400 .

Single, P. B. & Muller, C. B. (1999). Electronic mentoring: Issues to advance research and practice. East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 439 683)

Single, P. B. & Muller, C. B. (2000). Electronic mentoring: Quantifying the programmatic effort. East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 440 969 23p.

Smeaton, P. S. & Waters, F. H. (2000). Keeping Connected: An Asynchronous Communication System to Support Student Teachers. T.H.E. Journal, 28, 2, 106-15.

Spooner, F., Agran, M., Spooner, M. & Kiefer-O'Donnell, R. (2000). Preparing personnel with expertise in severe disabilities in the electronic age: Innovative programs and technologies. The Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 25, 2, 92-103.

Spooner, F., Spooner, M., Algozzine, B., & Jordan, L. (1998). Distance Education and Special Education: Promises, Practices, and Potential Pitfalls. Teacher Education and Special Education, 21, 2, 121-31.

Stanulis, R. N. & Weaver, D. (1998). Teacher as mentor, teacher as learner: Lessons form a middle-school language arts teacher. Teacher Educator, 34, 2, 134-43.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Postsecondary Education Quick Information System , "Distance Education at Postsecondary Institutions: 1997-98". [Online] Available: http://nces.ed.gov/ pubs2000/2000012.pdf

Whitaker, S. D. (2000). Mentoring Beginning Special Education Teachers and the Relationship to Attrition. Exceptional Children, 66, 4, 546-68.

White, M. (1995). Factors contributing to special education teacher attrition: How a one year internship affects the attrition rates of special education teachers in Kentucky. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.

Theodore J. Montemurro
Chris Hagie
Steve Zlotolow
San Jose State University
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95192-0078

AN ONLINE MILD-MODERATE TEACHER PREPARATION PRORAM

The shortage of special education teachers is a chronic problem. In the opening remarks of a presentation to the Congress of the United States, Carriker (1989) stated,

> This nation has a serious shortage of qualified special education and related services professionals. Projections of both student and professional demographic data indicate that over the coming years the shortages will reach crisis proportion and seriously impede the ability to provide students with handicaps the special education and related services they are guaranteed under Federal Law. (p.1)

Between 1987 and 1993 there was an annual shortage of approximately 29,000 fully qualified special education teachers. This was nearly twice as large as the shortage in general education. In California for the years 1997-98, 14% of all emergency permits were issued to special education teachers. In Santa Clara County where San Jose State is located the number of special education emergency permits increased from 71 to 87 between the years of 1996-97 and 1997-98. In counties near San Jose State University for the years 1996-97 and 1997-98, Alameda County increased the number of special education emergency permits from 100 to 170. Likewise in Contra Costa County there was an increase in emergency permits from 111 to 197. While in Monterey County the number of emergency permits decreased from 26 to 23.

These findings lead to two main facts. The supply of fully certified teachers entering special education is much too small and the high turnover of continuing special education teachers results in a large number of transitional teachers, a substantial percentage of whom are only partly certified (Boe, Cook, Bobbitt & Terhanian, 1998).

There are a number of possible remedies. One is to reduce attrition or transfer to general education. The attrition rate ranges from 7.3% -12% for special educators and from 5.3%-9% for regular educators (Illinois State Board of Education 1981, Boe, 1991). Another is to expand professional development programs, and increase the production of graduates of special education teacher preparation programs. This is the purpose of the proposal, to expand teacher preparation programs by offering a program on-line.

To be sure, teaching an on-line course requires planning, training and support. Comments from faculty indicate that preparing a course for delivery on-line takes 4-5 times longer than does a traditional course and needs to be supported by release time. Training and technical support are also needed. Faculty need support from an instructional designer and access to technical assistance (Cyrs, 1997).

There are four objectives of presentation.

1. To address the needs of emergency permit special education teachers by offering an online teacher preparation. The one most related to teacher preparation is to expand professional development programs and increase the number of graduates of special education teacher preparation programs by offering an online special education teacher preparation. Online courses allow students to define when and where they learn. Our service area has a radius of 60 miles extending from San Francisco Bay south to Santa Cruz, Monterey Bay and the Salinas Valley and northeast to Contra Costa County. For emergency permit teachers traveling 2 round trips of as much as 120 miles to and from campus and attending two 3 hour long live sessions per week for a 15 week semester makes very long days. Each online course saves one to four hours of travel time per week that can be better spent preparing lessons, meeting with mentors or support providers, or conferring with parents. Now students take courses at their home in their slippers or anywhere on the plant.

2. To detail the resources necessary to deliver an online teacher preparation program.
Teaching an online course requires planning, training, and support. Comments from faculty indicate that preparing a course for delivery online takes 4-5 times longer than does a traditional course and needs to be supported by release time of a minimum of one course. Training and technical support are also needed. Faculty need the support of an instructional designer on an as needed basis and access to technical assistant for 3-5 hours per week.

3. To describe the instructional technological services used in designing an online course.
In order for faculty to design online courses they need training and support in pedagogy of online instruction, creating graphic material, considering choices on how to achieve course objectives. For platforms, we began by using WEBCT and switched to ewebclassroom.com because it required less technical knowledge and offered superb support. Both programs offer tutorials that engage faculty as students in an online asynchronous instruction for 4 t0 6 weeks. The act of learning online helps faculty to understand and experience what learning online is like and to better understand what their students are experiencing.

4. To share the reflections of faculty members who designed online courses and are teaching online courses.
Faculty must alter their mind set from traditional course instruction to online instruction. Faculty are able to use existing pedagogy to create individual, social, one-way and interactive lessons. Communication is essential! Faculty and students communicate by email, by online discussion, by online messages, by telephone, by orientation meetings and when the curriculum dictates live, by face to face classroom sessions. Faculty use textbooks designed for online learning. Textbook publishers web support for examinations, case studies, CD-ROM for preparing Individual Education Programs with forms and vignettes, resource modules, and study tools.
A final note during registration the online courses fill up faster than the traditional live courses.

Reference

Annual Report: Emergency Permits and Credential Waivers, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, (May, 1997).

Annual Report: Emergency Permits and Credential Waivers, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, (May, 1998).

Boe, E. E. (1991, July) National and state teacher attrition data: Analysis and policy Implications. Paper presented at the Elementary and Secondary Education Data Conference. National Center for Education Statistics. U.S. Department of Education.

Boe, E. E., Cook, L. H, Bobbitt, S. A. & Terhanian, G. (1998) The shortage of fully certified teachers in special and general education, Teacher Education and Special Education, 21, 1, 1-21.

Cyrs, T. (Fall 1997) Teaching and learning at a distance: What it takes to effectively design, deliver, and evaluate programs. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Illinois State Board of Education (1981). Illinois supply and demand for special education personnel. Springfield, IL State Board of Education.

Donald M. Stenhoff
Ronda Menlove
Bryan Davey
Melina Alexander
Department of Special Education & Rehabilitation
Utah State University
2865 Old Main Hill
Logan, UT 84322-2865

PREFERENCE OF STUDENTS' RESPONSE AND OUTCOMES OF DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE EVALUATION

Distance education is growing rapidly especially in higher education settings. More and more students are enrolling in classes that are delivered over a technologically-based system. In fact, a report by The International Data Cooperation (IDC) estimated that 2.2 million college students will be enrolled in distance education by 2002, an increase from approximately 710,000 in 1998 (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 1999).

Student learning in distance education courses is comparable with traditional student learning in on-campus courses (Souder, 1993). While student learning is comparable, more research is needed in the area of instructor effectiveness in delivering distance education courses and student satisfaction with distance education courses. We feel that it is too simplistic to examine distance education as a whole. There are several instructional components that are integrated in distance education. The purpose of this survey was to gain students' rankings of teacher-student and student-technology interactions.

Methods

Participants & Setting

The participants were students at a Carnegie Research I university enrolled in at least one of four undergraduate or graduate distance education courses in special education (N=103). All of the students surveyed were enrolled in a Bachelor's of Science, Master's, or Doctoral program in Special Education at the university. Students' ages ranged from 22-46+ and ranged in class ranking from juniors to doctoral levels. About 85% of the respondents were female and about 15% were male. All of the students had taken at least one distance education course, and the majority had taken as many as six or more (Table 1).

Table 1
Student Demographics

	Course Number & Percentage of Responses			
	SPED 5060 N=12	**SPED 5070 N=13**	**SPED 5340 N=13**	**SPED 6700 N=23**
Gender:				
Male	9%	8%	15%	35%
Female	91%	92%	85%	65%
Age:				
18-21	0%	0%	0%	0%
22-25	9%	8%	8%	10%
26-29	18%	8%	8%	10%
30-33	18%	23%	23%	25%
34-37	0%	8%	8%	15%
38-41	36%	46%	46%	5%
42-45	9%	8%	8%	10%
46+	9%	0%	0%	25%

Class Ranking:				
Freshman	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sophomore	0%	0%	0%	0%
Junior	0%	8%	0%	0%
Senior	100%	91%	80%	6%
Master's	0%	0%	20%	72%
Doctorate	0%	0%	0%	22%
Number of distance education courses taken:				
1	0%	0%	0%	21%
2-3	9%	0%	0%	26%
4-5	9%	8%	8%	21%
6 or more	82%	92%	92%	32%

Five instructors taught these courses. Three instructors were full-time faculty at the university and had taught using an interactive audio video teleconferencing system before. However, two of these instructors were new to the internet-delivered audio video teleconferencing system used while teaching the following courses, "Teaching Math to Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities (SPED 5340), and "Single-Subject Research Design" (SPED 6700). The third instructor, who taught "Policies & Procedures in Special Education" (SPED 5070), has taught several courses using the internet-delivered audio video teleconferencing system. Two instructors co-taught "Consulting with Parents & Teachers" (SPED 5060). They were first time instructors in a higher education setting, were adjunct faculty, and were new to distance education (Table 2). Three courses were at the undergraduate level; one was a graduate level course.

Table 2

Course Number, Title, Enrollment, and Instructor Experience

Course Number	Course Title	Enrollment	**Instructor Experience**
SPED 5060	Consulting with Parents & Teachers	24	• 1st class taught at university level • No experience with distance education • Co-taught class • Adjunct faculty
SPED 5070	Policies & Procedures in Special Education	22	• Taught several classes using internet-delivered audio video teleconferencing system • Faculty
SPED 5340	Teaching Math to Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities	24	• Taught prior distance education course • 1st time using internet-delivered audio video teleconferencing system • Faculty
SPED 6700	Single-Subject Research Design	33	• Taught prior distance education course • 1st time on internet-delivered audio video teleconferencing system • Faculty

Classes were transmitted to approximately seven sites across the state. Distances ranged from on-site to 250 miles. The on-site room had two monitors in the room. One monitor displayed the instructor, and the other displayed the graphics, such as the PowerPoint slides the instructor used for lectures. Students on-site could also see the instructor directly. Instructors sat in the front of the room and could see the on-site students physically, i.e., without the aid of a monitor.

Off-site rooms had a conference table, multiple tables, or desks for students to sit at. The computer monitor was placed in a location where all students could view it. Microphones were placed in a location that students could access them for site-to-site communication.

Procedures

The study questionnaire was conducted using a web-based survey instrument that was available two ways. Students could access the survey by clicking on a hyperlink in the course website that would take the student directly to the survey instrument, or via an email hyperlink sent directly to the students. When students clicked on the hyperlink, it took them directly to the survey instrument.

In each of the surveyed classes, a researcher spoke to the students explaining that they would be receiving a survey in an email message and could also access the survey through the course website. Additionally, the researchers expressed the importance of completing the survey to improve the quality of distance education courses at the university. The survey was initiated 15 days prior to the end of the semester. Students had access to the survey for a total of 15 days.

Nonrespondents were emailed a second time 5 days before the survey was closed as recommended by Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996. The email again included the hyperlink to the survey instrument.

Apparatus

Delivery system. Classes were delivered using a synchronous, internet-delivered two-way audio video teleconferencing system (Sorenson EnVision). Using this system, the instructor was able to see the students at all of the sites simultaneously via monitors stationed in front of the instructor. Students were able to see the instructor and graphics, e.g., PowerPoint slides, simultaneously during instruction. On-campus students could view the instructor on one monitor and graphics on another monitor. Students at remote sites viewed the instructor and graphics on one computer monitor. The monitor displayed a "talking head" in the left corner frame of the monitor screen and the graphics in a larger frame in the middle of the monitor screen (Figure 1). Instructors had the ability to change the talking head frame so the students could see students at other sites. Some instructors may have used this option more frequently than others. In order for students to talk, they had to retrieve the microphone, press a button on the microphone, then talk. The microphone then sent their audio to all of the other sites.

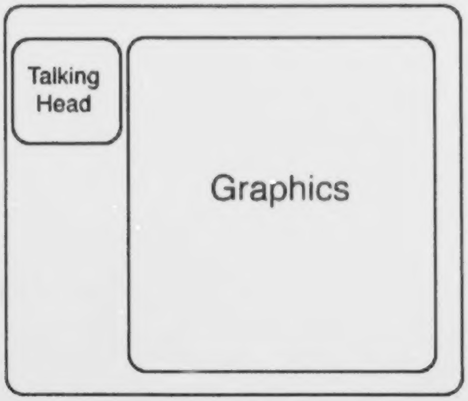


Figure 1. Graphic representation of computer monitor screen viewed by students at remote sites.

Survey instrument. Survey questions were compiled from previous course evaluation surveys and included additional items the authors identified as related to measuring instructor and student interactions. A 4-point Likert-type format was chosen for the survey (Gall, et al., 1996). The benefit of using this type of survey format is that it allows the students to specify the degree to which they hold a particular view (Hayes, 1998). Survey questions may be found in Tables 3 and 4.

Web-based survey service. The survey was conducted using a web-based service called Zoomerang that may be found at www.zoomerang.com. The service provides tools to gather and analyze feedback. After sending a survey instrument, the results are held in a private and secure environment. Users are able to customize or re-write templates, and launch the surveys with personalized greetings (Zoomerang, 2001). The cost of the basic service is free.

Data Collection

Data were collected from the survey website and percentages of responses were tabulated. Overall data for each course survey were printed from the Zoomerang website. Printouts were made for each student's survey responses and results were then compiled by class.

Results

Teacher-Student Interactivity

One hundred and three surveys were distributed through email. There was a total response rate of 59% (N=61). Ninety-three percent (N=57) of the surveys were completed via email hyperlinks. Only four students (7%) accessed the survey via the hyperlinks located on the course websites. Results are listed in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3

Student Responses to Questions Regarding Interactivity by Percent

		Percentage of Responses			
Questions		SPED 5060 N=12	SPED 5070 N=13	SPED 5340 N=13	SPED 6700 N=23
1. **The instructor effectively used the technology delivery system.**	Strongly Agree	9%	62%	31%	16%
	Agree	36%	38%	62%	63%
	Disagree	45%	0%	8%	11%
	Strongly Disagree	9%	0%	0%	11%
2. **Students were given opportunities to ask questions.**	Strongly Agree	27%	85%	46%	74%
	Agree	55%	15%	54%	26%
	Disagree	18%	0%	0%	0%
	Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%
3. **Students were provided opportunities to express opinions, make comments and share ideas.**	Strongly Agree	18%	69%	38%	79%
	Agree	64%	31%	46%	21%
	Disagree	18%	0%	15%	0%
	Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%
4. **Class time was used efficiently.**	Strongly Agree	9%	62%	23%	11%
	Agree	18%	23%	54%	42%
	Disagree	55%	15%	23%	32%
	Strongly Disagree	18%	0%	0%	16%
5. **Questions asked via telephone, i.e., voicemail, were answered in a timely manner.**	Strongly Agree	10%	69%	23%	11%
	Agree	50%	31%	69%	74%
	Disagree	20%	0%	8%	16%
	Strongly Disagree	20%	0%	0%	0%

6. **Questions asked via email were answered in a timely manner.**	Strongly Agree	9%	85%	38%	22%
	Agree	45%	15%	54%	61%
	Disagree	18%	0%	8%	11%
	Strongly Disagree	27%	0%	0%	6%

Eighty-five percent of the students who responded in SPED 5070 recorded a "Strongly Agree" on Question 1, "instructor effectively used the technology delivery system," (Table 3). This was followed by SPED 5340 and SPED 6700 students with 31% and 16% respectively. However, 62% and 63% of students in SPED 5340 and SPED 6700, respectively, reported that they "Agree" with Question 1. Over half the students in SPED 5060 reported they at least "Disagree" (45%) and "Strongly Disagree" (9%) with Question 1 (Table 3).

When asked if they were "given opportunities to ask questions" (Question 2) and to "provide opportunities to express opinions, make comments, and share ideas" (Question 3) student ratings were highest for the experienced instructor (SPED 5070) with 85% and 69%, respectively. Student ratings were also high for SPED 6700 with 74% and 79%, respectively. The majority of students across all the classes recorded levels of at least "agree" for these two questions. However, 18% of students enrolled in SPED 5060 recorded "Disagree" when asked Question 2. This was the only class in this question who recorded a "Disagree" with the question (Table 3).

Question 4 asked if "class time was used efficiently." There was a significant difference in students' ratings of this question. Student ratings for SPED 5070 was 62% (Strongly Agree). The second highest was 23% for the SPED 5340 course; however, student ratings for "Agree" was 54%. Ratings by students for SPED 5060 were 55% "Disagree" for Question 4 (Table 3).

Student ratings of Questions 5 and 6, asking whether questions were answered in a timely manner via voicemail and email also were highest for the experienced instructor (SPED 5070) with 69% and 85%, respectively. The two other faculty members' students recorded 69% (SPED 5340) and 74% (SPED 6700) for Question 5. Students' ratings for SPED 5340 and SPED 6700 faculty members for Question 6 recorded a 54% and 61% for "Agree", respectively (Table 3).

Student-Technology Interactivity

Sixty-nine percent of the students who responded in 5070 recorded a "Strongly Agree" on Question 7, regarding usefulness of the website for the course (Table 4). This was followed by the SPED 6700, SPED 5340, and SPED 5060 students with 47%, 31%, and 9% respectively. Additionally, students' ratings for "Agree" on Question 7 were 64% for SPED 5060 and 46% for SPED 5340 courses. See Table 4.

The majority of students accessed the website weekly as seen on Question 8, "frequency I accessed the website." Students' ratings were 64%, 54%, 69%, and 75% for "Agree" across the courses (Table 4).

Question 9 asked, "I found the website easy to use. Students' ratings in courses SPED 6700, SPED 5060, SPED 5070, and SPED 5340 were 63%, 64%, 77%, and 77%, respectively. Three "Strongly Agree" for Question 9 (Table 4).

Table 4

Student Responses to Questions Regarding Interactivity with Course Technology

Questions		Percentage of Responses			
		SPED 5060 N=12	**SPED 5070 N=13**	**SPED 5340 N=13**	**SPED 6700 N=23**
7. **I found the website useful for my course.**	Strongly Agree	9%	69%	31%	47%
	Agree	64%	31%	46%	26%
	Disagree	18%	0%	23%	21%
	Strongly Disagree	9%	0%	0%	5%

8. The frequency I accessed the website was:	Daily	27%	38%	31%	15%
	Weekly	64%	54%	69%	75%
	Monthly	9%	8%	0%	10%
9. I found the website easy to use.	Strongly Agree	64%	77%	77%	26%
	Agree	36%	15%	23%	63%
	Disagree	0%	8%	0%	11%
	Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%

Discussion

This survey process gathered rankings of instructor and student interactions from students enrolled in distance university special education classes at a public university. Survey instruments were emailed to each student or were accessed via the course website. This survey has several limitations. First, the measure was not validated prior to initiation (Gall, et al., 1996). Second, it is possible that not all students were able to access the survey instrument on the Internet. Students who answered the survey may differ from those who did not. However, the survey does provide the authors with insights into the current state of distance education in the Special Education Department as well as direction for future study.

Weston and Amundsen (2000), discussed several issues that need to be considered in on-line instruction. Three of these considerations include: student access, interactivity, and navigation. The survey instrument addresses each of these considerations. Questions 7, 8, and 9 addressed student access to the course website, student-technology interactivity, and navigation (Table 4). Questions 1 through 6 addressed teacher-student interaction (Table 3).

Ninety-three percent of the students accessed the survey using the hyperlink that was directly emailed to them. This factor may have implications in the method instructors use to interact with their students outside of class time. Another factor that may have contributed to this outcome was the convenience of having the hyperlink sent directly to the student instead of the student searching for the hyperlink on the course website.

Overall, teacher-student interaction ratings appear to be higher in the course where the most experienced instructor taught (SPED 5070). It also appeared to be lowest in the course where the least experienced instructors taught (SPED 5060). This may be due to a number of factors. First, it may be the amount of experience of teaching at the higher education level. Secondly, it may be the amount of experience teaching using the distance education medium.

Question 1 asked how effectively the instructor used the technology delivery system. As seen in Table 3, the instructor with the most experience received higher student ratings than the other instructors. The two instructors who had prior distance education experience (SPED 5340 and SPED 6700) but not on the internet-delivered audio video teleconferencing system received the second highest ratings. Furthermore, we see that the instructor with the least amount of distance education experience (SPED 5060) receiving the lowest ratings. Prior experience with distance education might be the result of the ratings.

The questions relating to "opportunities for students to ask questions" and "providing opportunities to express opinions, make comments and share ideas", Questions 2 and 3, resulted in higher ratings for the experienced teacher (SPED 5070) and higher ratings for the SPED 6700 teacher (Tables 2 and 3). A student rating worth noting is found in Table 3, Question 2. The teachers who had the least amount of teaching experience (SPED 5060) had a rating of 18% "Disagree" while no other teachers received this rating for their courses. This may also be related to the factor of experience instructing and with the distance education medium. Microphone access may have contributed to student ratings as well. Some students may be apprehensive to ask for the microphone, or possibly speaking over the internet-delivered audio video teleconferencing system. This provides need for future research regarding these possible factors.

Efficient use of class time student ratings also provided some interesting data. The students' ratings indicated that the three faculty members used class time efficiently. However, the SPED 5060 course with the first time teachers instructing, had student ratings of 55% of the students recording "Disagree" on this question (Table 3).

Questions 5 and 6, which students rated for "voicemail and emails answered in a timely manner" again had student ratings that favored the experienced teacher (SPED 5070). A possible reason from this may include techniques that allowed the instructor to respond more efficiently to student questions or the instructor may have, over time, developed a system for responding to voice and email.

A majority of the students' ratings indicated that they found the course website useful for their course. But here again the instructor with the most distance education experience (SPED 5070) received the highest percentage of students strongly agreeing with Question 7 (See Table 4). Possible explanations for this difference in students' ratings may be attributed to instructor understanding of the course website. Other possible explanations may include prompting from the instructor to use the website for various information and assignments that required website interaction to complete.

Question 9 asked for students' ratings of the ease of use of the course website. Overwhelmingly, the majority of students in the SPED 5060, SPED 5070, and SPED 5340 courses rated that they "Strongly Agree" that the course website was easy to use. In the SPED 6700 course, however, the majority of students only "Agree" with the ease of use. Examination of Table 1 shows that the students in SPED 6700 reported having far less distance education courses than the other three. Again, experience becomes a possible issue.

In light of the current study possible questions for future study surface. Does instructor effectiveness in the use of the technological system have a relationship to higher rates of interactivity between students and teachers? Do the lower ratings for the first time instructors indicate a need for training in distance education prior to instructing? What is the relationship between technology training and higher student ratings? What are effective strategies for increasing teacher-student interaction both during class and for questions answered via voice and email? There is need for replication of this survey in different disciplines, instructors and delivery systems. Additionally, it is necessary to expand the numbers of survey respondents to examine trends in student rankings.

References

Council for Higher Education Accreditation. (1999). An ongoing study on distance learning in higher education prepared for CHEA by the Institute for Higher Education Policy. Distance Learning in Higher Education, CHEA Update,(2). Retrieved February 16, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.chea.org/Commentary/distance-learning-2.cfm#distance-learning-students

Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1996). Educational research: An introduction (6th ed.). New York: Longman.

Hayes, B. E. (1998). Measuring customer satisfaction: Survey design, use, and statistical analysis methods (2nd ed.). Milwaukee: ASQ Quality Press.

Souder, W. E. (1993). The effectiveness of traditional versus satellite delivery in three management of technology master's degree programs. American Journal of Distance Education, 7(1), 37-53.

Weston, C., & Amundsen, C. (2000). Characteristics of effective online instruction. Retrieved October 31, 2000, from the World Wide Web: http://socserv2.mcmaster.ca/srnet/3F_weston.htm

Zoomerang. (2001). Zoomerang website. Retrieved February 17, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.zoomerang.com

Debbie Keasler, M.Ed
Joe Nolan, Ph.D
Southwestern Oklahoma State University

PROJECT FITT – FACILITATING INCLUSION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

An inclusive school is a place where students are taught in the mainstream through use of appropriate educational programs that are challenging, yet geared to the students' needs. Additionally, the goal of inclusion is about belonging and participating in a community of one's peers, and being supported to succeed in an accepting yet challenging environment (Schwartz, 1996) . The decision for a school district to follow an inclusive philosophy is not one that can be reached overnight. Inclusion may work well in some schools and not in others. One point that observers on both sides of the inclusion debate agree on is that there can be no short cuts to implementing the reforms that provide the foundation for inclusion of children with disabilities. The Council for Exceptional Children (1993) in its policy statement on inclusive schools and community settings stressed that:

> "state departments of education, local educational districts, and colleges and universities must provide high-quality preservice and continuing professional development experiences that prepare all general educators to work effectively with children, youth, and young adults representing a wide range of abilities and disabilities, experiences, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, attitudes, and expectations. Moreover, special educators should be trained with an emphasis on their roles in inclusive schools and community settings. They must also learn the importance of establishing ambitious goals for their students and of using appropriate means of monitoring the progress of children, youth, and young adults."

When looking at inclusive policy in small rural districts, one also must look at inclusion for the gifted and talented student. This child is often underchallenged in the regular classroom and cannot be served in a specialized Gifted and Talented program because of the small size of the school district.

The Regular Education Initiative (Will, 1984) proposed the concept of planning lessons for the top and bottom 20% of the class with the assumption that the rest of the children would be able to comprehend the lesson at their own level. The ability to plan and teach under this philosophy is difficult for any teacher, especially one not trained to teach gifted children or those with cognitive disabilities.

The training process to facilitate inclusion in a school district is not something that can be accomplished in a in-service or series of in-service training sessions. It must be a continual dialogue which provides support, encouragement, confidence, and empowerment. Project FITT is a program designed to provide this training and ongoing support to school districts in Western Oklahoma while being sensitive to the unique characteristics of each community.

This project plans on meeting this need in the following manner:

1.) Utilizing technology as a teaching aid in the Kindergarten through twelfth grade classroom for modifying activities for children with cognitive disabilities and providing challenging activities to students who are gifted and talented. Using this approach, all students will be able to benefit at their own level.
2.) Serving as a clearing house for activities and lesson plans available on the World Wide Web (WWW), and for evaluation of educational software.
3.) Working in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education Aurora project to modify and strengthen current activities for K - 12th grade students and to design new activities for gifted and special needs students.
4.) Face to face training for K-12th classroom teachers on utilizing technology to foster successful inclusion.
5.) Infusion of this program into preservice teacher education classes to empower future teachers in the use of technology as a tool to serve all students.
6.) E-mail consultation with classroom teachers.

The collaboration involved in study offers preservice teachers and inservice teachers an insight to the availability of materials, techniques and services that are adaptable for all students. The inservice teachers take on the role of mentors for the preservice teachers via the internet. The preservice teachers are able to assist the mentor teachers in updating their knowledge base.

This program will enhance the learning process of all students in Western Oklahoma while serving the unique needs of gifted students and those with cognitive disabilities. More importantly, it will increase the flexibility, competence and confidence level of our classroom teachers.

Gail Peterson Craig, Ed.D.
University of Wisconsin-Superior
Belknap & Catlin; P.O. Box 2000
Superior, WI 54880-4500

USING TECHNOLOGY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING

In a report prepared for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Educator Supply and Demand Project (2000) provided data to demonstrate the serious shortage of special educators within the state. Special education vacancies accounted for approximately one-third of all 1999-2000 vacancies filled by emergency licensees. Within special education, positions in emotional disorders and learning disabilities accounted for approximately 44% and 23% of special education emergency licensees respectively, indicating a severe personnel shortage in these categorical areas. The report suggests that there is a "need for teacher training institutions to investigate innovative methods to recruit, retain, and graduate students across licensure…areas in which shortages exists" (p.24).

The University of Wisconsin-Superior serves the ten most northern counties in Wisconsin, or the top one-third of the state, with an area population of approximately 170,000. In addition, about 35% of the student body is drawn from a combination of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and the east central and northeast sections of Minnesota. In order to participate in a traditional college program, many students must travel hundreds of miles a day, several days per week.

The special education program at UW-Superior has two full time faculty, who also teach classes within the general education teacher program. This year we began an undergraduate minor, which we hope will serve as a feeder into the current graduate program as one way to increase the number of certified special educators. At this time, the only way a student can earn special education licensure within our program is to complete the Masters of Science in Education (M.S.E.) degree in special education. There are two licensure areas: learning disabilities and emotional/behavior disabilities.

The course schedule for the program never changes, therefore, a student cannot wait for courses to be offered in the summer and gradually satisfy all the program requirements. Also, they would not have the time to wait because almost all of them are teaching on special education emergency licenses and most of the school districts have strict time limits on the length of time an emergency license can be used. Even though they are teaching on an emergency license, most are given the full range of responsibilities including assessment and IEP development almost immediately and long before they finish their course work. It is imperative that they have immediate and ready access to a special education teacher training program. This need has shaped the development of a program at the University of Wisconsin-Superior that uses a variety of approaches for providing courses to students living at a distance from the campus.

To work to increase the number of courses that can be accessed from a distance is an on-going process. As we explore how to do this, questions are raised. Are there some knowledge and skills within a special education teacher program that should be presented and practiced in a whole-group, face-to-face teaching environment? Cobb (2000) refers to this as the fear of adequate substitutes. How can we develop an alternative path to the traditional on-site program which supports the needs of the students scattered over such a large, rural area but also provides them with the quality of education they need in order to be a successful special educator? At this point we are not limited as much by the technology that is available but by the need to have time and support for developing the courses.

Already in place is a combined audio/visual distance learning network (IDE: Interactive Distance Education) that is connected to most of the secondary schools in Wisconsin. Distance education is defined as the provision of learning resources to remote learners and involving both distance teaching (the instructor's role in the process) and distance learning (the student's role). It is the use of educational media to unite the teacher and learner and to carry course content (Henderson, Duda, & Pember-Jones).

One of the distance learning classrooms on the UW-Superior campus has been up-dated so that there is continuous feed to a maximum of three sites. This means that from the UW-Superior site, two camera video signals can be simultaneously transmitted and three incoming video feeds from the different student sites can be displayed. Among these four classrooms, the teacher and the students can interact spontaneously without having to control the feed. If there are no technological glitches, it is a very user-friendly environment within which the students and the instructor can interact with little difficulty. With some adjustments by all the participants, it is an approximation of the traditional university learning environment. At present, the following courses are taught over IDE: Contemporary Issues in Special Education, Introduction to Learning Disabilities, Assessment and Intervention (LD), Learners with Emotional/Behavior Disabilities, Assessment and Intervention (E/BD), and Introduction to Reading Difficulties (first half of the course).

Within this basic framework, the instructor and the students must support each other in order to create a successful learning experience. Everyone needs a sense of humor, patience, and an acceptance that the pace of the class will be a little slower in order to accommodate for the transmission among the sites. Technology does shape both the instructor's teaching style and the students' learning styles. Using interactive distance video for instruction demands more advanced planning and organization by the instructor. Also, the instructor must develop skills and teaching strategies that personalize the instruction and involve the students in the experience (Siantz & Pugh, 1998). If not, the lesson could degenerate into "talking heads", with the instructor lecturing and the students at the sites being passive observers. The students must make a concerted effort to interact with the class as a whole and get to know each other, even though the class is divided among four sites.

I developed two short informal surveys to get some feedback from the graduate students about their experiences with distance education and also to explore the attitude of their principals toward the use of distance learning within a special education teacher training program. Each student at an IDE site was asked to complete a two-page survey that included questions answered using a Likert Scale, a listing of preferences, and an evaluation of teaching strategies. They were also asked to conduct a short interview with their principal and were provided with six questions. The results appear to be influenced by the students' need for convenience and the principals' lack of personal experience with distance education.

The graduate students were reluctant to be critical. The majority thought that (1) the teaching strategies effectively supported their learning equally well at the site compared to being at the university, and (2) the technical problems did not decrease the quantity or quality of the learning. The consensus of opinion was that all graduate courses could be taught effectively over the IDE network, if appropriate adaptations were made. They suggested the following personal attributes if one is to successfully learn through a distance education format: self-motivated, self-disciplined, patient, focused, organized, committed to being prepared for class, and a willingness to use new technology. In addition, they suggested that the top three attributes of a successful instructor within this format are patience, flexibility, and organizational skills.

The questions asked of the principals attempted to find out if they thought IDE courses were increasing the number of special educators available in their district and what were their personal opinions about giving all courses in a special education teacher training program through a combination of interactive video classes and online classes. They all agreed that cutting down on the travel time was a better use of the teachers' time and increased the number of special educators in their schools. They were divided in their opinions about whether classes in teaching methodologies and behavior management should be given as online courses. Several said that these classes are better if taken with peers as human interaction is important for practice in application of the material, but online classes would be better than long travel time.

The conclusion reaching, within this particular MSE-Special Education Program, is that there is such a need for the graduate students to have ready access to the knowledge and skills used in their daily responsibilities as special educators, that self-motivation overrules most of the problem areas found within an IDE program. The principals are not as supportive as the graduate students but they confirm that the special education teachers on emergency licenses within their schools are benefiting. Therefore, they are not too critical of courses given over a distance education network or online.

Superior, Wisconsin and Duluth, Minnesota are referred to as the Twin Ports. The cities are separated only by the St. Louis River. At certain times, approximately half of the graduate students in the UW-Superior MSE-

Special Education Program are Minnesota residents. They do not have access to the Wisconsin IDE network. They too can live and work hours from the UW-Superior campus but they must travel to campus in order to take classes. Their needs are another important reason for the current focus on developing online classes.

UW-Superior has a very active Faculty Development Center (http://fdc.uwsuper.edu) that has as its mission the enhancement of "teaching and learning…by providing instructional leadership and supporting faculty in professional development and curricular design." I turned to the Center's team to guide me in the development and administering of a Web-based course with the working title: Teaching Exceptional Children.

One of the roles of the director is to listen to the concerns of neophytes to this approach to teaching and provide resources directly related to the questions raised in the orientation conversations. What I quickly learned was that this was going to be a much more complex and time consuming process than I had hoped/expected. I also was going to have to keep the complexity of the project within my comfort level at this time. The development of the course, as with all courses, will be an on-going process. Also, through reading the articles provided by the director, I was relieved to learn that others too were curious but also apprehensive about this new approach to teaching.

It is very helpful that the University of Wisconsin has a Web-based Learning System through which we have direct access to the WWW software, Blackboard, Inc. (1998). This software provides a user-friendly format through which to develop the different components of the course. It is clearly set out in a manual that includes outlines on "Instructional Design Tips" and "10 Easy Steps to Taking A Course (or Pieces of a Course) Online". In addition, a Student Manual is available online through which students are introduced to working in an online course and provided information for general troubleshooting.

After reading the informational material and with the assistance of the director of the Faculty Development Center (FDC), decisions must be made which shape how the course material will be presented, the degree of student-student, student-faculty interaction, testing procedures, links to supplementary readings, use of audio and/or video, reporting of grades, holding office hours, etc. After talking informally with colleagues, I know that I will need to be particularly aware of how to create and monitor group discussions. I do not want to stay up until all hours answering e-mail in order to encourage student interaction, but I do want the students to know that I am paying attention and value their active involvement in the ideas being raised.

Another question, about which I am doing a lot of reading, focuses on how to create a lesson without basing it on a traditional lecture format. A wide-range of articles addresses this dilemma directly. The reader is told bluntly that text-based lectures should be short and few in number as it is difficult to read screen after screen of text on a computer. The curriculum of an online course should be designed to cause dialog among the students (Illinois Online Network, 2000). The instructor and the FDC work as a team to create a course in which the students are welcomed to the course (it is suggested that photos of all participants be posted), and video, audio, and links to supplementary resources are used to add vitality and breadth/depth to the lessons. The director described this as first creating a structure and then filling it up. We are meeting weekly to work on course development so that it can be offered during the next academic year.

There still are questions that need to be addressed by our MSE-Special Education Program as it works to provide courses to students living at a distance from the university site. The Interactive Distance Education network is a strong cornerstone but because of the need to reach students outside the Wisconsin state borders, it is necessary to expand into providing courses online. The severe personnel shortages in both of the licensure areas covered in the Program demand that we begin using innovative methods to help increase the number of licensed special educators available in rural areas of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

References

Cobb, J. The fear of adequate substitutes: Distance learning knocks at the door of traditional business academe. Retrieved December 4,2000 from the World Wide Web: http://www.abeonline.net/adequate.htm.

Henderson, J., Duda, M., & Pember-Jones, D. Web companion to building learning communities in cyberspace: Effective strategies for the online classroom. Retrieved from the World Wide Web: http://137.159.69.101/dpember/OMAET/Web Companion.htm.

Illinois Online Network. Alternatives to the online lecture. Retrieved January, 24, 2001 from the World Wide Web: http://Illinois.online.uillinois.edu/IONresources/instructionaldesign/altlecture.html.

Siantz, J. D., & Pugh, R. Using interactive video for instruction: Office of education technology services, Indiana University. Retrieved November 29, 1998 from the World Wide Web: http://www.ihets.org/distance_ed/ipse/fdhandbook/uiv.html.

Wisconsin Educator Supply and Demand Project for Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2000). An examination of data trends 2000: Supply & demand of educational personnel for Wisconsin public schools. Madison, WI.

Barbara Ludlow
West Virginia University
P. O. Box 6122
Morgantown, WV 26506

Michael Duff
Discover Video Productions
362 Creston Avenue
Morgantown, WV 26505

WEB-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATORS

Providing professional development opportunities in current best practices for practicing special education and related services personnel is an important contemporary issue. The rapid changes in these disciplines have made it nearly impossible to insure that teachers and therapists stay abreast of developments in the field to provide state-of-the-art educational programs to students with special needs(Boe et al., 1996). It is especially difficult to provide appropriate inservice training opportunities for special education personnel in rural areas (Ludlow, 1998).

The research literature on staff development suggests that traditional workshops and conferences are not adequate to effect change in professional behavior (Miller & Stayton, 1995). Instead, many educators advocate the use of training that is extended over time to allow for reflection and assimilation, provides occasions for immediate application of new knowledge/skills to the job setting, and supports the individual practitioner by offering guidance in adapting new information to the context of specific schools and community agencies. (Gallagher et al., 1997; Sexton et al., 1996). Yet, state and local educational agencies as well as colleges and universities have failed to implement such inservice programs, largely because of limited resources. As a result, many of today's practitioners engage in programming that reflects the era in which they were trained, rather than current best practice, a problem that threatens the quality of services provided to students with special needs.

Technology-mediated distance education is rapidly becoming widely used for personnel preparation in special education at both the preservice and inservice levels, especially in rural areas (Ludlow, 1995). Today's telecommunications technologies allow quality programs to be delivered to many individuals effectively and efficiently without the barriers of time and space (Howard et al., 1992). Although Web-based instruction is just now being explored for its distance education potential, it has many promising applications in teacher education in special education. Web courses and workshops are especially appropriate for inservice training of practitioners (Kelker et al. 1992; Kendal, 1992). Web-based instruction allows learners to work at home or school to process materials at their own pace, to interact with the instructor and other practitioners as needed. and to receive individually designed feedback as they apply information to real world settings.

A team of presenters will describe the development, delivery, and evaluation of four Web courses designed to serve as staff at a distance for practicing special educators and related services specialists in a rural state. The instructor, who served as content expert and instructional designer, will outline the steps in identifying topics and learning objectives, selecting multimedia materials, and planning activities and assignments. The media producer will describe the technical aspects of preparing and programming of the modules incorporating audio and video media and graphics and animation. The teaching assistants will discuss recruitment and participation of practitioners and logistical aspects of managing the courses, including addessing individual learning needs and report the procedures for evaluating learning outcomes and participant perceptions. The presenters will display samples of actual Web pages from the courses, showing how staff developed the modules and how participants interacted with the materials. They will distribute a handout listing resources for creating and managing Web-courses and engage the audience in discussion of the pros and cons of using Web-based options for training personnel.

The theme of this year's conference is "Growing Partnerships for Rural Special Education". Partnerships are an integral component of professional development for practicing personnel in rural areas because most rural school systems and community agencies do not have access to all the expertise needed to keep their staff abreast of new developments in current best practice in special education and disability services. Consequently, they must rely on relationships with colleges and universities that prepare personnel for rural areas to provide many inservice training activities, either as workshops or courses designed as professional development. The Web-based training model described in this session is a workable mechanism for delivering training effectively and efficiently, coordinating training across multiple schools and agencies for better use of resources as well as promoting collaboration among practitioners in isolated locations through online networking.

References

Boe, E.E., Cook, L.H., Kaufman, M.J., & Danielson, L. (1996). The shortage of fully certified teachers in special and general education. Teacher Education and Special Education, 21(3), 1-21.

Gallagher, P., Malone, D.M., Cleghorne, M., & Helms, K.A. (1997). Perceived inservice training needs for early intervention personnel. Exceptional Children, 64(1), 19-30.

Howard, S.W., Ault, M.M., Knowlton, H.E.,& Swall, R.A. (1992).Distance education: Promises and cautions for special education. Teacher Education and Special Education, 15(4),275-283.

Kelker, K., Garthwait, C., & Seligman, M. (1992). Rural special education options. Human Services in the Rural Environment, 15(3), 14-17.

Kendal, R.M. (1992). Evaluating the benefits of a computer-based telecommunications netowrk: Telementoring and teletraining for educators in rural areas. Journal of Research in Rural Education, 8(1), 41-46.

Ludlow, B.L. (1995). Distance education in rural special education: Where we've been and where we're going. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 14(2), 47-52.

Ludlow, B.L. (1998). Preparing special education personnel for rural schools: Current practices and future directions. Journal of Research in Rural Education, 14(2), 1-30.

Miller, P.S., & Stayton, V.D. (1995). Personnel preparation in early intervention: Recommended preservice and inservice practices. In S.L. Odom & M.E. McLean (Eds.), Early intervention/early childhood special education: Recommended practices (pp. 329-358). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Sexton, D., Snyder, P., Wolfe, B., Lobman, M., Stricklin, S., & Akers, P. (1996). Ear;y intervention inservice training strategies: Perceptions and suggestions from the field. Exceptional Children, 62(6), 485-495.

Robert S. Cook
Sarah Rule
Center for Persons with Disabilities
Utah State University
6818 Old Main Hill
Logan, UT 84322-6818

WHEN FACE TO FACE WON'T WORK: INTERNET-BASED FOCUS GROUPS

Increasingly, and for good reason, service delivery programs are seeking consumer input during their planning and development stages. In the past "experts" developed services and delivered them as pre-packaged to consumers under the assumption that experts knew best how to create curriculum and other services. If a service did not meet consumers' needs, it was a problem with the consumer, not with the experts or the delivered service. Often, the services were appropriate and meaningful to consumers. When services were not appropriate and meaningful, however, consumers were often captive audiences restricted by time, space, and knowledge from critiquing the program or from seeking alternatives that more directly met their needs (Rowntree, 2000). In best case scenarios either consumers were able to modify their learning strategies and make best use of the service or the experts developed new versions of their programs that, hopefully, better met consumers' needs. Consumers of special education services were no different in this respect, frequently accepting or working around programs that only marginally met their needs.

More recently, as recognition of consumers' expertise has increased, the incorporation of consumer input in service development has increased as well. Now, consumer participation is considered important from the initial stages of program and service development, to the completion of the final product, to the development of revisions and alternatives that more closely met consumer needs. In this manner, service delivery has become more consumer driven, ensuring that services meet the needs of their intended audiences. The question becomes, at this point, how to gain effective consumer participation in the process of program and service development. For special educators, consumers include family members and the children themselves--certainly those at least as young as elementary age.

Focus Groups are one Means of Achieving Consumer Input

Focus Groups are one means of identifying consumer needs and preferences (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990). They allow potential consumers to examine a service or a proposed service and provide immediate feedback that can then be used to more effectively develop and deliver that service or product. Traditionally, focus groups are based in the use of face-to-face group discussions. Such group discussions are easily facilitated in large population clusters where members of the target population are plentiful. In comparison, focus groups are difficult to facilitate in rural areas where members of the target population are few and are spread over large areas. Due to difficulties related to the long distances it is necessary for participants to travel and to the scarcity of potential participants, the use of face-to-face focus groups in rural settings is quite problematic, if not impossible.

Potential of the Internet to Increase Focus Group Participation

The Internet, with its capability for facilitating communication between individuals separated by space and time, has greatly expanded our notions of how people can communicate and under what conditions they can develop working relationships. Internet-based communication tools such as chat rooms, emails, threaded discussions, and listservs all provide the opportunity for individuals separated by great distances to join together and share experiences, opinions, and ideas.

Given the options for Internet-based group interactions, it seems plausible that focus groups could be conducted via the Internet. While several articles exist that advocate the possibilities of Internet-based focus groups (e.g., Chepesiuk, 1996) research that evaluates the efficacy of Internet-based focus groups is minimal (Adriaenssens & Cadman, 1999; Fulop, Loop-Bartick, & Rossett, 1997; Tse, 1999; Wheller, 1996). Additionally, some focus group experts have expressed the belief focus groups cannot be effectively conducted over the Internet. Greenbaum (1998) for example, states that the communication limitations of the internet (lack of face to face interaction, lack of nonverbal communication, and inability of the moderator to personally interact with focus group members) make it impossible for focus groups to exist in an internet environment. As previously noted, however, the limited research base is insufficient to evaluate the merit of these concerns.

Necessity is the Mother of Innovation

The SPIES Outreach Project began to consider the possibility of internet-based focus groups when we saw the need to obtain consumer input into development of a Web-based version of the curriculum. Strategies for Preschool Interventions in Everyday Settings (SPIES) is a validated curriculum for personnel preparation of professionals and paraprofessionals to teach the skills of naturalistic intervention with preschool children who have or are at risk for disabilities. In its current format, SPIES is a six module, videotape and manual based curriculum funded by a multiyear grant from the Office of Special Education Projects (OSEP). An abbreviated version is available on CDROM. One of our objectives for the project is to modify SPIES to make it suitable for primary caregivers of children with disabilities and to then offer the modified curriculum over the internet as a means of maximizing the opportunities for caregivers to access it.

Operating out of the Center for Persons with Disabilities (CPD) at Utah State University, we were faced with several difficulties in securing consumer participation through traditional means. First, Logan, Utah, where CPD is based. is a predominately rural region. Second, it is frequently difficult for caregivers of preschool children with disabilities to make the time commitments and arrange for appropriate child care necessary to participate in the several sessions we believed would be necessary to gain adequate consumer input. Concurrently, because SPIES has a national dissemination goal, we wanted to develop a system that would enable us to obtain consumer input from across the country. For these reasons, we began to evaluate the possibility of attempting to utilize the Internet as a means of assembling prospective focus group members into a viable forum. In the process of this evaluation, we faced the lack of research into this area, but rather than viewing this as an impediment, we saw an opportunity to both meet our needs and to gain information into the efficacy of internet-based focus groups.

Recognizing, however, that we were entering relatively uncharted territory, we decided to begin our focus group in the traditional face-to-face manner and then transition the group to internet-based sessions. This also provided us the opportunity to evaluate similarities and differences between the two modalities—face-to-face versus internet-based. We thus sought to answer three questions. First, how should we modify the SPIES curriculum to make it appropriate for parents and could we make it deliverable over the Internet? This question was essentially independent of whether the focus group was conducted in person or over the Internet. Second, can effective consumer input be obtained when a focus group is conducted over the Internet. Third, are there differences in focus group effectiveness and interaction when conducted in person or over the Internet.

Methods

Participants

Participants were six adult parents of children with disabilities. Among the six participants, there were two married couples. A seventh adult (husband of one participant) participated in the last focus group. The disabilities experienced by the children ranged in severity from massive developmental delay with multiple sensory impairments to hearing loss with ear deformation. All participants lived in the Cache Valley of northern Utah. Their residences ranged from living in the largest community of the valley (approximately 46,000) to the smaller outlying towns. Participants were solicited through advertising in the valley-wide newspaper, through the local parents' support group, through a preschool preparation program, and through an early intervention program. Participants received honorariums in the amount of $40 per session attended.

Organization of Sessions

Four focus group sessions were conducted from September 19, 2000, through December 12, 2000. The first two groups were conducted approximately 2 weeks apart. We then paused for approximately one month in order to build a Website to the specifications identified in the first two groups. The last two sessions were conducted six weeks apart due to scheduling difficulties related to the holidays.

Face-to-face sessions.

The two face-to-face sessions were conducted according to standard focus group principles (Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996). Because the sessions were conducted in the evening, food and beverages were provided. Two weeks prior to the first session, participants received through the mail a CDROM version of the SPIES curriculum and its corresponding manual. The CDROM contains a well-evaluated, abridged version of SPIES. Participants were asked to view the CDROM as if it were a Website. Because the goal of the first session was to elicit general impressions and suggestions, participants were requested prior to the first session to "play" with the CDROM rather than attempting to formally work their way through the curriculum. For the second session, participants were requested to formally progress through the CDROM in preparation for discussing specifics of the curriculum as well as navigation and "look and feel" issues that might guide the development of the Website. An agenda of questions available from the first author was followed for each session. The first and second face-to-face sessions were intended to be recorded on microcassette and then transcribed. Due to error on the part of the moderator, the first session was not recorded. A synopsis of this session was created by the moderator and delivered to each participant by email with the request that they edit or add to the synopsis as necessary to capture their participation in the session. The second session was successfully recorded and transcribed. After transcription, the microcassettes were erased.

Internet-based sessions.

The two Internet-based sessions were conducted via a proprietary chat program provided by the Acropolis Online Learning Environment at the University of Utah Center for Persons with Disabilities (The Acropolis Chatroom is designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities). In both Internet sessions, an agenda of questions developed on the basis of prior session responses and on the basis of developments of the Website were followed. Because nonverbal communications were unobservable, group members participated in drafting a set of protocols for determining when to proceed to the next scripted question. Similarly to face-to-face sessions, flexibility in questioning was maintained in order to address issues as they arose during the sessions. The Internet sessions focused on the design of the Website both generally and specifically. Generally, participants provided feedback on issues such as ease of access, look and feel, and movement within the site. Specifically, they provided feedback on specific issues such as colors, graphics, videos, and placement of items. They also provided feedback on the quality of the curriculum and appropriateness of the information presented. All communications in the Internet-based sessions were recorded as a function of the Acropolis Chat Program. These verbatim transcripts were downloaded onto a password protected computer system and then erased from the chat program.

Data analysis.

Using the transcripts, responses were reviewed to identify major themes present in each session. In this manner, five major themes were identified and are listed in Table 1. All responses were then categorized into one of the identified themes. Once categorized, responses were reviewed for content relevant to each of the research questions.

Table 1
Major Themes and their Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme
1. Informal	Relationship Building
	Information Sharing and Seeking
2. Presentation	Movement
	Look
3. Information	Usefulness
	Accessibility
4. Group Facilitation	
5. Overall Impression	

Results

Curriculum Modifications:

Our first research question related directly to the primary objective of developing an effective, accessible, attractive, Website. We began the internet-based focus groups with a prototype Website that group members interacted prior to providing feedback about it. This prototype Website was built according to current best practice standards in web-based design. Group participants, however, were negative in their responses to the "look and feel" of this site. They found it too cold and professional. They expressed the opinion that a caregiver-oriented site should employ primary colors and should immediately give some indication that the site was child related. In response to this feedback, our second prototype made extensive use of primary colors and child appropriate pictures (toys and animals). Response from participants about this site indicated that we had moved too far in this direction. Their feedback indicated that they found the site too cute and child-like giving them the impression that there would be little information of substance on the site. Thus, our final version of the Website maintained it's emphasis on primary colors but did not employ child appropriate pictures.

A second area of significant importance in site development focused on video examples. The SPIES curriculum relies heavily on video examples to provide models for how to use naturalistic intervention strategies. Participants found these videos extremely useful and extremely important. At the same time, however, they were dissatisfied with the lengthy download times necessary to access the videos (up to 20 minutes on some of their Internet connections). Participants were clear that they would discontinue any download that took more than 15-30 seconds. As a result of this conflict between the importance of video examples and time restriction on downloads, we have determined that for our purposes, a fully internet-based Website will be ineffective. We are currently working on development of a CDROM/Internet hybrid in which videos are provided to consumers on CDROM. These videos are then directly accessed via hyperlinks on the Website. In this manner, the curriculum itself can be modified as necessary while the video examples can be instantaneously accessible regardless of curriculum changes. These two changes to our Website goals and design present the most significant results of our focus group. Other minor changes such as the use of frames, the wording of written materials, and alterations of screen space management have also been made based on feedback from the focus group.

Can Effective Consumer Input Be Obtained When a Focus Group Is Conducted Over the Internet

Based on the above results, it is our opinion that effective consumer input can be achieved through internet-based focus groups. In fact, there may be several advantages to conducting focus groups over the Internet. First, participation took less time (drive time, time spent arranging for childcare) than when sessions were face-to-face. Second, as researchers, all conversation was immediately transcribed at a 100% level of accuracy. Third, participants seemed more willing than when in person to offer critical feedback, that is, they seemed less concerned about offending the moderator or the Website developer when sessions occurred online. An example of this type of feedback can be seen in the following excerpt where one participant comments on the font used in the first prototype Website: "The choice of fonts on the top horizontal buttons is kind of ugly."

There were disadvantages, however, to the Internet-based sessions that must also be addressed. First, although more critical feedback was offered, it was more likely to be offered in a manner that could be considered inconsiderate. Because there is no opportunity to evaluate nonverbal communication, there may be more chances that participants will be offended and reduce their participation without the moderator's awareness. Second, it was difficult at times to determine whether participants were thinking, avoiding participation, or experiencing technical difficulties. Again, the lack of nonverbal feedback makes it difficult for the moderator to both determine what may be happening and therefore make appropriate corrections. Within the areas of technical difficulties, persons with reading difficulties and persons who cannot touch-type can be at quite a disadvantage at the current state of internet-based chat rooms. Third, because participants entered the online sessions from their homes, they were more easily and more frequently distracted by their children.

Many of the positives and negatives of our Internet-based focus groups can be seen as trade-offs. For example, participants did not have to arrange for childcare, but they were more easily distracted by their children. There was a greater likelihood for critical feedback, but that feedback was less likely to be provided in a considerate manner. Ease of participation was compromised by technical difficulties at both the human and the computer level. Persons wishing to employ Internet-based focus groups must, therefore, strongly consider these trade-offs and plan how to minimize the negative aspects of either face-to-face or Internet-based focus groups.

Are There Differences In Focus Group Effectiveness and Interaction When Conducted in Person or Over the Internet

There was no indication that participants provided less information in less detail over the Internet than they did when meeting face-to-face. It may be important to the process of using the Internet and for offering opinions in the focus group, of course, that participants had participated in initial face-to-face sessions. The differences in group effectiveness, as noted above, can be considered more as trade-offs than as inherent advantages of one form over the other. The feedback we received both over the Internet and face-to-face was invaluable in helping to develop a consumer oriented, effective web-based curriculum.

There were differences in interactions among group members on the basis of how the groups were conducted. In face-to-face sessions group members tended to engage in more informal communications than over the Internet. They also, however, tended to interrupt more frequently and to speak simultaneously rather than one at a time. Communications in general were lengthier in face-to-face sessions. It appeared that on the Internet sessions, participants were more likely to think their thoughts through before expressing them possibly as a result of having to write them. It is also possible that participants felt more comfortable pausing before answering knowing that their input would continue to be valid even if the conversation had moved to a different subject. Participants were more likely to comment on process during the Internet sessions. They would express communication or hardware concerns. Those who had more difficulty with the non-linear mode of chat communications (that is, several threads of conversations could be onscreen at the same time) expressed their difficulties freely. At no point during the face-to-face sessions was there discussion of process, suggesting that either such discussion was unnecessary or that participants were less willing to discuss communication difficulties in a traditional, "everybody should know how to do this" format.

Results of evaluating both the face-to-face sessions and the Internet-based sessions suggest that focus groups can be equally effective in either format. There are differences, however, in the interactions that occur each format. An internet-based focus group has some interaction strategies that are different from those employed in face-to-face sessions. There were no indications in our sessions that one set of strategies is inherently more effective than the other.

Discussion

We found the Internet-based focus groups to be effective in providing appropriate, valuable input regarding the development of our Website. There was no evidence that a focus group cannot be conducted over the Internet. It was clear, however, that interactions and protocols will take a slightly different form on the Internet. Moderators who rigidly apply face-to-face conventions will find themselves struggling in an online environment. Moderators who recognize the broader goal of focus groups—organized but informal group discussion that addresses a particular topic or topics (Vaughn, et al., 1996)—will find themselves capable of developing and using strategies that facilitate the group in whatever medium the sessions occur.

In light of the differences we discovered between face-to-face and Internet-based focus groups, we would offer the following suggestions to researchers who consider using Internet-based focus groups. First, have at least one face-to-face session prior to meeting online. Although, especially in rural environments, face-to-face meetings are more difficult to arrange, they allow for participants to meet in a medium they are comfortable with, to develop relationships in that medium, and to begin the process of group formation. Also, it is easier for the moderator to establish an appropriate relationship with group members. Second, have a practice chat-room session in which little if any issues of substance are addressed (it is possible that in a facility with a "computer lab" this practice session could occur in conjunction with the face-to-face session). This session should focus on technological issues, on developing mutually agreeable protocols, and on helping participants become familiar with participation in a chat-room. Third, prepare participants for possible problems such as disconnections and slow reaction times from other participants. Fourth, set time limits for responses to each question. Agreeing ahead of time that each question will be "on the table" for perhaps five minutes or ten minutes allows the moderator to introduce new questions or discussion threads without fear of cutting off dialogue. Fifth, be flexible. Internet-based communications are in their infancy. We are all learning new methods of communication and of expressing ourselves at a distance. Recognize that old patterns of communication may not apply and be ready to attempt new strategies on a case-by-case basis.

In conclusion, our program, The SPIES Outreach Project used a combination of face-to-face and Internet-based focus groups to gain consumer input into the Website we were building. The logistical difficulties of conducting face-to-face focus groups in our rural setting were overcome by our willingness to consider and evaluate an Internet-based protocol. We recommend that other programs with similar needs and with similar rural issues consider the Internet-based focus group as a viable research option. We hope that as research in this area grows, as the body of knowledge about effective online communication and relationship development grows, a better understanding of the qualities of effective Internet-based focus groups will ensue to the benefit of service providers and consumers alike.

References

Adriaenssens, C. & Cadman, L. (1999). An adaptation of moderated e-mail focus groups to assess the potential for a new online (Internet) financial services offer in the UK. Journal of the Market Research Society, 41(4), 417-424.

Chepesiuk, R. (1996). Where the information superhighway meets the back roads. American Libraries, 27(10), 42-44

Fulop, M. P., Loop-Bartick, K., & Rossett, A. (1997). Using the World Wide Web to conduct a needs assessment. Performance Improvement, 36(6), 22-27.

Merton, R. K., Fiske, M., & Kendall, P. L. (1990). The focused interview: A manual of problems and procedures (2nd ed.). New York: The Free Press.

Rowntree, D. (2000). Who are your distance learners? [On-line].
Available: http://www-iet.open.ac.uk/pp/D.G.F.Rowntree/distance_learners.htm

Tse, A. C. B. (1999). Conducting electronic focus group discussions among Chinese respondents. Journal of the Market Research Society, 41(4), 407-415.

Wheeler, J. J. (1996). The use of interactive focus groups to aid in the identification of perceived services and support delivery needs of persons with developmental disabilities and their families. Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 31(4), 294-303.

Transition

Richard Strasburg
West Virginia University
G 30 Mountainlain
PO Box 6423
Morgantown, WV 26506-6423

ISSUES IMPORTANT FOR RURAL STUDENTS POST SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

This session will address research and issues significant to assisting rural students transition successfully to post secondary academic training.

Connie Heimbecker
Evangeline Bradley-Wilkinson
Mary Helen Begay
Brian Bradley
Nellie McCarty
Jacob Nelson
Armanda Gamble
Catherine Medina
Bernita Nelson
Bobbi Pettigrew
Karen Sealander
Jody Smith
Maria Snyder
Sherri White
Marsha Whitehair
Denise Redsteer
Greg Prater

Northern Arizona University
Center for Excellence in Education
PO Box 5774
Flagstaff, Arizona 86011

THE TRANSITION OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS TO KAYENTA FROM OUTLYING COMMUNITIES: PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

Introduction

The Navajo Reservation is located in the Four Corners area of the Southwestern United States. The reservation extends into Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, covering approximately 27,000 square miles. It is the largest reservation in the United States and yet only about 250,000 people live in these traditional Diné (Navajo) lands. The Reservation is home to more than a dozen national monuments, tribal parks, Anasazi ruins and other historical sites. Kayenta is located 23 miles south of Monument Valley, a holy place to The People (the meaning of their traditional name Diné). It is here the ancestors of the Navajo, First Man and First Woman originated. People travel from all over the world to view the beautiful sandstone and monoliths of the valley. Kayenta is one of the largest communities on the Reservation, with a population of approximately 6,500 people. This is the home of the Kayenta Unified School District (KUSD).

Today the Navajo Nation is striving to sustain a viable economy for an ever-increasing population that currently surpasses a quarter of a million. Twenty five miles away from Kayenta the Black Mesa Coal Mine is a major employer of the residents of Kayenta. Indian Health Services and the local schools are other major employers. Other businesses include: three hotels, one supermarket, two laundromats, a video store, one bank and several restaurants and gas stations. There is also a branch of the Navajo Department of Law Enforcement as well as other Navajo Nation social service providers. Some people still live traditionally on family homesteads in hogans or other houses with no electricity or running water. Many own or rent modern homes with satellite dishes and every other convenience.

The student population of KUSD is heterogeneously made up of children from a wide range of home situations. Some parents are concerned and informed about the educational needs and abilities of their students. Some are not. Extended family units are common, and in some cases children are raised entirely by their grandparents or other relatives. In many cases children learn Navajo as their first language.

Kayenta Unified School District is comprised of four schools. The Primary school serves children from kindergarten to second grade while the Intermediate school provides services to children in grades three to five. The Middle school is for children from sixth to eighth grade and Monument Valley High School (MVHS) is for students in grades nine to twelve. The approximate number of children enrolled in KUSD is 2,627. About ten percent of these students receive services through their special education department. As Kayenta is considered a hub on the Reservation, many children from smaller communities attend KUSD schools at some point in their educational careers. On the Reservation, children may attend any public school that they choose. Schools are not assigned by geographical region. As a matter of fact, families living in a community 65 miles away may choose to transport their children 20 miles to the KUSD bus stop so their child can attend school in Kayenta despite the fact that their community has very similar educational opportunities.

Unique to the KUSD is a cooperative venture between the District and Northern Arizona University's Center for Excellence in Education (NAU-CEE) called the Reaching American Indian Special/Elementary Educators (RAISE) program. RAISE is dedicated to providing education leading to a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education and is funded by a grant from the Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS). The program is delivered to cohorts of students in their local communities who spend one and one-half years together (Sealander, Eigenberger, Peterson, Shellady, and Prater, in press).

RAISE has been described as a program transported to the reservation. This *transporting* enables local participants to complete a degree program while remaining with their families, retaining their jobs, and sustaining their support networks (Heimbecker, Minner, & Prater, 2000). Moreover, the marriage of theory and practice set in the context of the primarily Navajo culture, strengths, and needs are important aspects in the cohort program (Sealander, Eigenberger, Peterson, Shellady, and Prater, in press).

Purpose

The purpose of this paper and research is to inform interested individuals of the challenges faced by the Kayenta Unified School District and outlying communities in their efforts to adequately provide educational opportunities for their transfer students with special needs. Since children and families are free to choose the school students will attend there are often transfers for personal reasons, which are never disclosed. There are also many students who transfer into the District after completing the eighth grade in a community that does not offer a secondary education program. Information regarding this transfer will be shared and described. The importance of collaboration between schools and districts will be emphasized in particular as in many cases transfers are very sudden which was an unexpected finding of our study. The partnership and transfer could be much improved by increased family involvement. In some cases, families do not disclose information regarding special education services provided for their child by the previous school. Finally, individual's views about the transition process will be documented.

The primary objective of this paper is to present information about transitions of special needs students in rural areas. It is important to note that the transition in this paper is the transition from school to school, not from school to work. Topics to be discussed are: 1) the amount of time spent on the bus and the special bus services available, 2) experiences with special education and student services and 3) the interaction between students with special needs and their peers. Relevant views of KUSD and outlying school personnel will be documented. Finally the efficacy of the current system will be evaluated with a desire to improve the current program if necessary.

Methodology

The information for this paper was collected by members of the RAISE program in Kayenta, Arizona under the supervision of their instructors from NAU-CEE. A set of interview questions were developed for three populations: 1) students, 2) parents, and 3) special education personnel. Seven parents were interviewed as well as 6 students (one 4th grade student, three middle school students and two high school students).

Student interviews were performed after obtaining signed parental consent. Names and identifying information was not documented in order to protect confidentiality. Of the students interviewed, two have visual impairments, one is autistic, one has spina bifida, one has Navajo Neuropathy and the other has a learning disability. This is not a random sample as confidentiality laws and policies limited the researchers' ability to identify students who might be ideal interview candidates. Special education personnel from each of the following KUSD schools were interviewed as well: Kayenta Primary School (KPS), Kayenta Intermediate School (KIS), Kayenta Middle

School (KMS) and Monument Valley High School (MVHS). In addition special education personnel from the outlying schools, Chilchinbeto Community School (CCS), Dennehotso Boarding School (DBS), Kayenta Community School (KCS) and Monument Valley High in Utah (MVU) were also contacted. Some cases were obtained from the information shared by school personnel. Informal interviews were conducted with the Transportation Department, various office staff and the Director of Special Education for KUSD.

Interview Questions

Special Education Personnel

1. How many students transfer into/ out of your district? Why?
2. What is done to facilitate the transfers/ transitions?
3. How is the communication between schools?
4. How are the student's families involved in the transition?
5. What accommodations are made in bussing new students with special needs?

Parents

1. Why did you choose to have your child change schools?
2. Would you have preferred that your child stay at the other school? Why or why not?
3. Is the child's current school meeting his or her needs? How?
4. If not, how could they improve your child's service?
5. How do you think the transition went for your child?
6. How does your child get to school?

Students

1. Which school did you like most? Why?
2. What did you experience coming to a new school?
3. How is the new school meeting your needs? If not, what could they do better?
4. What do you like about coming to the new school?

Results

General Findings

Kayenta Unified School District functions as an inclusion model. Most students with special needs spend their school day just like any other student. They ride the regular bus to school, eat breakfast in the cafeteria, play with their peers until the bell rings and attend classes with other students in their grade level. They eat lunch and take elective classes with their peers and are eligible to participate in after school programs. They are bound by the same rules of conduct as the other children in their classes. Even students who require a lot of help are placed in regular classrooms with support as often as possible. Of course there are exceptions. Some students are met at the bus and walked to class. Some spend time in a resource room and are supervised more closely. Some students may give up one elective to receive tutoring services during the day. Our interviews indicated that inclusion has been a fact of life for the children of KUSD for about 10 years. Children with special needs may be generally better accepted by other students here than at other schools.

Other schools generally offer a more varied program including resource rooms and mainstreaming. In these programs, students with special needs are generally more isolated from their peers as they spend more time in a resource room, but may receive better educational services due to smaller class size and specialized help. One of these educators said that while she believes in the benefits of inclusion, teacher and student attitudes at the school do not allow the children a comfortable learning environment in the regular classroom programs. In some cases accommodations are not made for the children by their classroom teachers, and there have been instances when teachers themselves have made hurtful comments.

KUSD busses travel in excess of 2,000 miles per day. The first child is picked up at 5:45 in the morning. The last student riding the school bus home is not dropped off until between 5:45 and 6:00 in the evening. Students are also bussed into Kayenta from communities as far away as Shonto (45 miles). Four-wheel drive busses make numerous stops, and some students spend nearly 4 hours per day on the bus, much of that time on unpaved roads.

Considering that the average lunchtime is at about noon, the child does not receive a meal for at least six hours. Most students with special needs ride regular busses with other students. They are dropped off at the roadside stop and walk to their homes. In some cases the stop is very close to their homes. Yet, in one instance, a boy receiving services walks 1.6 miles to his home. He would like to stay after school for additional reading help, but his family worries about him walking that distance through the desert alone on a dark cold road. There are two special education busses. They are used primarily for the more highly involved students; those who are wheelchair bound, suffer from a seizure disorder or are in some way physically unable to handle the rigors of a full day at school. Those busses provide door to door service and children are not left unless there is someone home. In some cases when roads are not properly maintained, especially after a heavy rain, the bus monitor will have to push the wheelchair through the mud from the school road to the family home.

The results from the survey questions are as follows:

Special Education Personnel

1. ***How many students transfer into/ out of your district? Why?***

Local schools lose their entire eighth grade class as a result of promotion to other schools. Very young children may transfer from Head Start or pre- school to kindergarten. There were documented transfers to and from every school for other reasons as well. The number varied, but appeared to correlate somewhat with school size. Sometimes a family moves. KUSD personnel said that people like to send their children to KUSD because of the programs and services available. In addition, KUSD has 2 full time Navajo speaking school psychologists on staff. Other schools contract out to non-native people for their testing. As a result, some children who would be considered in need of special education services by other professionals are not so considered when language and cultural differences between the assessor and child are removed. Schools often do not have information regarding the exact reasons students transfer out. In some cases children transfer several times per year. Some children leave a school because of behavior problems that causes Social Services to become involved and send the student to a residential setting.

2. ***What is done to facilitate the transfers/ transitions?***

No school in this study has a transition plan to other schools. Educators say that often parents do not inform the school of their intention to withdraw their child. In one instance, when the home school liaison went to check on the child, he found the house boarded up. Until the new school requests information, schools often have no idea where the child is. Surprisingly there is no transition plan for incoming ninth graders either.

3. ***How is the communication between schools?***

Within Kayenta Unified School District there are transition meetings and information is readily transferred from school to school. In some cases, it can take four to five months to receive records from another school. Most schools will share information on a "need to know" basis over the phone, however in many cases written records arrive incomplete and out of order. Most school personnel believe that communication is not good enough, however there was a tendency to put the responsibility for better communication on other schools. "It is the other school's responsibility to help their students transfer in." Two schools felt that they shared good communication and that they worked well together. However, another school in the district did not have that experience.

4. ***How are the student's families involved in the transition?***

The general consensus was that for the most part parents and children simply decide to change schools. In some cases they do not inform the new school of any prior services. When parents fail to share this information, it may take months to rediscover the child's learning problem and begin the paperwork that allows the Special Education Department to step in to help the child.

5. ***What accommodations are made in bussing new students with special needs?***

No data were found to show any extra accommodations. Accommodations are the same for new students as for continuing students with special needs.

Parents

1. ***Why did you choose to have your child change schools?***

Two children had been in a residential facility for students with auditory and visual problems and their families wanted them closer to home. Several families moved into the area as a result of changing family situations. Most children transferred as a result of completing the course of study at their previous school. As we expected and in line with KUSD's assertions that students transfer into the District simply because they "want to come here" or are unhappy with the services provided at the old school, one of these parents gave that as their reason for moving their child.

2. ***Would you have preferred that your child stay at the other school? Why or why not?***

For several parents this question was moot as their child had to change schools as a result of completing the eighth grade, but generally those parents were happy with the services which had been provided. The mother of the children with visual impairments preferred the school that specialized in visual impairment services, but it was just too far away and she has been happy with the services in Kayenta. Two parents responded that they much preferred KUSD to the other school. Only one family preferred their old district.

3. ***Is the child's current school meeting his or her needs? How?***

Six of the parents are happy with the service received from KUSD. They believe the teachers are helpful and that their children are learning valuable life and self care skills as well as receiving instruction in traditional subjects. One parent said that "Ei diigis at'e, bitsiighaa' baadahaz'a." Which basically means that the school tries to help him but he has problems.

4. ***If not, how could they improve your child's service?***

One child transferred into the high school after completing the eighth grade at an outlying school. His paperwork was misplaced at the old school and KUSD was unable to properly place him. He is behind in most subjects and his family wants him to be placed in a reading class. This has not happened and the family believes that their desires have been ignored as "...the new semester started and he is still in classes that are too hard for him." In his old school he spent time in a self contained resource room where help was more readily provided. Another parent said that she would like to see her child protected better from students who tease him.

5. ***How do you think the transition went for your child?***

Most parents say the transition was difficult. Some did not know what happened with their children at school.

6. ***How does your child get to school?***

None of these children ride the Special Education bus. They ride the regular bus, walk or get rides from their parents.

Students

1. ***Which school did you like most? Why?***

2. ***What did you experience coming to a new school?***

These questions will be answered together as the responses are interrelated. Most children liked their old school better than the new one. This could be because in many cases the transition was a recent event. Most children had a difficult time making friends. Some experienced bullying and teasing. They had to find their way around a new environment. Some children did not even know how to open their lockers when they arrived. Most like their teachers but had a difficult time settling in.

3. ***How is the new school meeting your needs? If not, what could they do better?***

Only one child felt that the school was not meeting his/her educational needs. This child would like more individual help. One student would like a large print dictionary. Others liked the school and their teachers. They felt like they were learning and that help was readily available.

4. ***What do you like about coming to school?***

Most of the students do not enjoy coming to school. One of the younger children enjoys the playground equipment and the friends that have been made.

Conclusion

As in many rural areas, some children in Kayenta spend an excessive amount of time on the bus. Since students with special needs and their non-disabled peers are treated the same with regard to transportation, children who transfer in from the outlying communities may spend a substantial portion of their day on the bus.

When it was discovered that there were no transition plans in place, the researchers asked personnel what could be done. Most outlying schools said they would be willing to bring their eighth grade students to Kayenta to see the high school and meet their teachers ahead of time for an orientation. This would decrease children's tension about where to go and what to do. They would know where to go for help. They would learn where the bathroom, cafeteria and gym were located as well as their classrooms.

While most children had good experiences with the Special Education Department, the transition from a pullout program to one of complete inclusion is hard. Children are often not used to the responsibility of working independently or with minimal assistance.

Children had a difficult time making friends in their new school. This happens for many children who leave the comfort of their old school and transfer to a new place. Most students complained of being teased. It is difficult to know if this is because of their disability or simply because they are new. It has been observed that children from out of town may have a harder time fitting in than those who live in town. Researchers also noticed students with special needs working and playing with their non-disabled peers. In most cases they cannot be told apart. It is the children who look, or walk or act "different" who continue to have a hard time after the transition.

The researchers would like to see all educators assume responsibility for communication and good record keeping. It must be realized that it is the children who pay the price for a few papers stuffed into an envelope and shipped to the new school as incomplete records. It is the child who pays when the paperwork is lost or when sending it out is the last priority. The fact is that once a child withdraws from a school his or her education becomes the responsibility of the new school, but good communication is the responsibility of all participants. In a place like this where there is so much communicating and sharing of information to be done, it is vital.

References

Heimbecker, C., Minner, S., & Prater, G. (2000). Canadian and American community-based Native teacher education programs: A personal perspective. In Reyhner, J (Ed.), Learn In beauty: Indigenous education for a new century (pp. 35-44). Flagstaff, AZ.

Sealander, K ., Eigenberger, M., Peterson, P., Shellady, S., and Prater, G. (in press). Challenges facing educators in rural, remote, and isolated areas: Using what we know and what we have learned. Rural Special Education Quarterly.

Other

Michael Cunningham
Willamette Education Service District
2611 Pringle Road S.E.
Salem, Oregon 97302
e-mail: cunningham_michael@willamesd.k12.or.us

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO CRISIS RESPONSE IN RURAL SCHOOLS

Responding quickly and effectively to a crisis or tragedy that affects a school community can be a big problem for a smaller, rural school district. When a crisis occurs in a rural school, staff and students need the services of an outside team to help them recover their bearings and gain the emotional support they need. Large urban districts often form and train a district response team for this purpose. Smaller rural districts typically do not, for understandable reasons. By itself, a small district often lacks the resources to staff, train, and direct its own response team. Moreover, the need for a small district team to respond to internal crises would likely by very infrequent, which could negatively affect a team's performance once a crisis does occur, since team members would lack sufficient previous opportunity to put their training into practice.

One solution for a small rural district--based on economy of scale--is to collaborate with other districts and agencies to create a regional response team. The Marion and Polk Regional Flight Team, a two-county response team serving thirteen Oregon school districts, is one example of how such collaboration can occur. The Flight Team is the result of the cooperative efforts of the thirteen rural school districts, the Willamette Education Service District, and the Children's Mental Health Departments of Marion and Polk Counties. Last year, The Flight Team was recognized by the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) as an exemplary program in the area of Interagency Collaboration.

In existence for over ten years, the Flight Team has been able to respond quickly in the aftermath of a crisis or tragedy affecting any of the seventy-one small-town schools that serve approximately 24,000 students in rural Marion and Polk counties. These counties are geographically large and are located in the central part of Oregon's Willamette Valley. Since its inception in 1989, the Flight Team has responded to over one hundred crises, almost all of which has involved a student or staff death. These have included a drive-by shooting, two murders, several suicides by students and one by a teacher, and numerous other deaths from accidents or illness. On average, the team responds between eight and twelve times a year to schools needing assistance.

The overall goal of the Flight Team is to provide organization, support and direction for a school community during a time that is--or can easily become--confusing, overwhelming and chaotic. The team helps a school regain its bearings by providing students and staff members with the structure and opportunity to take the time to acknowledge the loss and to begin to explore the meaning of the loss on a personal and community level.

The purposes of this paper are threefold: first, to discuss the structure and operation of the flight team; second, to describe the nature of the interagency collaboration which allows the team to function smoothly, and third, to identify the steps a group of educators and other service professionals might take to create a regional response team.

Structure and Operation of the Team

The Flight Team consists of a coordinator, a small number of on-site team leaders and a large group of responders.

The team members--some seventy-five strong--are, with the exception of a few community members, employees of the school districts and the mental health agencies that have agreed to collaborate to provide this service. Team members include counselors, behavior specialists, speech pathologists, school psychologists, teachers, secretaries, administrators, and mental health professionals. Many team members are volunteers; all members have received special training in crisis management, psychological "first aid" and grief counseling. Some members have specialized training in coordinating and guiding the on-site activities of responders; still others are trained to conduct psychoeducational trauma debriefings. Typically, only a small subset of the team (between six and twelve team members) are needed for any one response.

Once at the school, the Flight Team provides assistance in numerous ways. These often include the following:

- assisting the administrator in determining and implementing crisis management procedures;
- assisting the administrator in responding effectively to media who may wish to cover the event;
- providing trauma debriefing sessions for students or staff who may have been traumatized by the crisis event or tragedy;
- providing grief counseling in classrooms and support rooms for students or staff who are trying to come to terms with the loss of a friend or a fellow student or a school staff member;
- monitoring and counseling students/staff who are very destabilized by the crisis event, either due to acute grief, lessened ability to cope, or because the loss involved triggers the re-experiencing of other losses more personal to them (special education students, especially those with emotional and behavioral problems, often may need more intensive monitoring and counseling support);
- referring and networking with community agencies to insure follow up support for students and staff members who are having significant difficulty coming to terms with the crisis event or tragedy;
- covering classes and attending to the myriad of small details so that the school community can deal with the loss and grief issues inherent in the crisis or tragedy;
- providing information to staff and students and parents regarding coping strategies that can support individuals in the days and weeks following the event; and
- assisting in organizing and planning school memorial activities.

Recruitment, ongoing training and overall coordination for the Flight Team are provided by the Willamette Education Service District (WESD), which serves all thirteen rural school districts. A special services administrator at the WESD is assigned to the team coordinator role and is given a small budget to cover training and materials cost. As the Flight Team Coordinator, he serves as the point of contact for a school that needs assistance, and he is responsible for determining which members of the team will be needed on a given response. The coordinator remains in close communication with those who are responding at a given school, so that further support and assistance can be quickly made available.

A few days after members of the Flight Team have been called to a school, the coordinator meets with those who went out on the response to debrief the day's events. Debriefings provide an opportunity to affirm the work of the team members involved. Debriefings also serve as a way to identify and analyze novel or unusual situations that may have occurred during the response so that the team as a whole can learn from them and thus improve its service.

The overall direction of the Flight Team is enhanced by the work of a standing advisory committee, comprised of WESD behavior specialists, public agency mental health specialists and educators from a number of the districts. The advisory committee meets quarterly with the coordinator to review recent responses, to suggest changes or enhancements to the team's operating procedures, and to determine current and future training needs.

Working Agreements Among Participating Agencies

All of the staff members on the team from our districts have been recruited with the advance permission of a school or central office administrator. Once the staff member has agreed to become a member, his or her district administrator agrees to release the staff member for two days of initial training, half a day of annual follow-up training and up to two days a year for participation in actual responses. The district pays for any substitute costs involved.

A significant minority of the team are mental health specialists from the Children's Mental Health divisions of the Health Departments in Marion and Polk County. These specialists are released by their administrators for initial and follow-up training. Unlike their school staff counterparts, the mental health specialists may respond more often than twice a year, if more than two crises were to occur in the particular part of the region they serve.

Another significant minority of the team are Willamette ESD behavioral specialists, school psychologists. These staff members, who are regularly assigned a portion of their time in the schools, are involved with Flight Team when a response is needed at a school they are serving. They receive special training as on-site response leaders and function in that role when called upon. All of the thirteen districts agree to this convention, which may mean that on occasion, the behavioral specialist or school psychologist scheduled to serve a particular school that day may instead be responding at another school.

A response by the Flight Team is set into motion when a school principal or district administrator requests a response by calling the Flight Team coordinator (or his backup) at any time, day or night. The Flight Team coordinator, after interviewing the requesting administrator to obtain relevant information, contacts Willamette ESD personnel and district volunteers to staff the response. The coordinator also contacts an administrator at Polk or Marion's Children's Mental Health Division. That administrator in turn contacts one or more mental health specialists and directs them to the response.

Suggested Steps In Creating a Rural Crisis Response Team

The following set of steps are generic in nature. Every rural area is unique, and specific decisions that are made in creating and supporting a crisis response team will be conditioned by demographics, geography and institutional relations among districts and between districts and public mental health agencies.

A person with a interest in developing a school-based crisis response team can begin by recruiting a small number of like-minded individuals in other districts (including, your regional education service agency) and from relevant public agencies for a study group.

The beginning task for this group would be to conduct a needs assessment. Such an assessment can help answer the following questions:

- How many students or staff members have died in our schools in the past five years?
- What kinds of deaths were they (e. g. accident, illness, suicide, murder)?
- What other kinds of traumatic events or crises have occurred in the last five years that have affected our schools?
- How did the schools respond to these deaths or to other traumatic events? What kind of support did students and staff need and what did they receive (in other words, what got done and what got missed)?
- What was the effect of these deaths or other crises on the school community (e.g. What was the recovery like for students and staff? How did the death or crisis involved affect the school's social and learning climate?)

After conducting the needs assessment, the study group would discuss and summarize its findings and then present them to district superintendents at one of their joint meetings. If the study group believes a response team is needed, it should propose that a multiagency task force be formed to develop a working proposal that would address such topics as team structure, coordination, operating procedures, recruitment, training, etc.

Assuming that the superintendents have agreed to the idea of forming a response team and have given the go-ahead for a task force to develop a working proposal, members of the study group can include more potential stakeholders as they transform themselves from a study group to a task force. They should consider including representation from the following groups: school administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, mental health therapists, parents, and students.

As the task force takes on its design work, it may choose to hire a consultant trained in school-based crisis responding. That person can provide invaluable insights and recommendations that will improve and streamline the response team design process. One principle the task force should keep in mind in the design stage is that of local control. In its operation, a response team functions best when its leader works directly with the school administrator and makes recommendations based on best practices and experience. Decision-making authority, however, must be retained by the school's administrator, for he or she is the one who bears the responsibility for those decisions.

A key question for the task force to answer in the design phase is which agency should be responsible for coordinating and training the team. An education service district or cooperative, which has ties to each school district, is often the best choice. An administrator in such an agency often has enough discretion and flexibility in his or her schedule to organize and dispatch a team at short notice.

Once the task force members complete their design work, they should take it back to the district superintendents for comment and approval. It's also critical that chief administrators in partnering agencies also "buy in" to the design, since they, in addition to school districts, will be dedicating resources to the team.

If the task force's proposal is approved, the work changes from design to implementation. An implementation plan with timelines, if not part of the initial design, needs to be created to guide the task force's efforts.

One critical task to accomplish before implementation is to create a first edition of a response team guide or manual that will inform schools, agencies and team members about the purpose, structure and operation of the team.

Another critical implementation task is to recruit personnel to become team members. Experience has shown that good responders do not have to have formal counseling training. People who are compassionate, who like children and adolescents, who listen well, and who don't get easily rattled make excellent responders. In recruiting team members, the task force should also consider the need for diversity of skills and backgrounds. The Marion and Polk Flight Team, for example, has Russian and Spanish speaking members, since many students in our region are English language learners whose first language is Spanish or Russian. It's also important to have some team members who have experience working with younger children and some team members who are comfortable working with middle schoolers or older adolescents. The task force will also want to recruit mental health specialists who are adept are working with students who may have been traumatized or who are displaying acute mental health needs after a crisis or tragedy has occurred.

Prior to beginning services, the new team must be trained and schools must be informed about the team and how its services can be accessed. Training of new team members should be conducted by an experienced presenter who understands grief and trauma and who can teach response skills in ways that positively affect both the minds and hearts of those who will be called on to respond to a school in need. Such a training requires at least two full days, with three days of training being optimum.

Using a collaborative approach to crisis response in rural schools involves a lot of hard work, especially in the initial stages of team development. The benefits of a collaborative approach are, nevertheless, well worth the effort. A team of trained and compassionate responders can provide wonderful help to staff and students to help them get through a difficult time in the aftermath of a tragedy. With the support of a team, staff and students can take the time they need to react and to grieve together as a group of affected human beings. And in expressing and sharing feelings of shock and loss, staff and students are generally able to return to the business of teaching and learning with less disquiet and perhaps a greater sense of community.

Guy H. Gilberts, Ph.D.
Chadron State College
Chadron, Nebraska, 69337

DEVELOPING RURAL SUPPORT GROUPS OR "TO DREAM THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM"

Introduction

Rural America finds itself becoming more rural, isolated, and marginalized. "Two thirds of America's school districts and one third of the nation's children are rural" (Helge, 1992, p 12). Through out rural America, "farms are consolidating and rural populations are shrinking. In areas like the western panhandle of Nebraska the crisis seems particularly acute" (Coeyman, 1999, p 13). In the state of Nebraska, 55,000 families currently farm and about 20,000 will quit farming in the next two years (Coeyman, 1999). Many counties in the mid-west have zero or negative population growth. These changes have a huge impact on the schools in rural areas. Just teaching in a rural school can put one at greater potential risk than in nonrural schools. Helge (1992) found that rural school faired worse than nonrural school in 34 or 39 social issues (e.g. drug/alcohol abuse, HIV infection, crime, suicide). Rural schools contribute a greater percentage of their resources to education than nonrural schools do.

Rural schools also have difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers. This is particularly true regarding special education teachers. One issue of particular importance for teachers in rural settings is the feeling of isolation, another issue is community pressure. Morrissette (2000) found that professionals in rural schools feel more isolation than their counter parts in nonrural schools. Educational professionals reported that the combination of poor roads, extended distance between rural settings and urban centers, and hazardous terrain were the major reasons for leaving rural schools. It is also common for urban teachers relocating to rural areas to feel culture shock. They often feel like strangers in the community and are likely to leave the rural setting (Marrs, 1984). All of these factors force rural schools to investigate new ways of providing professional support for their teachers.

Faced with a lack of resources, small cadres of teachers, and significant social challenges, how can special education teachers have their emotional and professional needs met? Each of us develops support groups for various reasons. Developing a support group that specifically addresses the issues faced in special education is a good idea in any setting, but especially in rural areas. The very things that cause educators to leave rural settings (the isolation, the community scrutiny) are the things that continue to face those educators who stay in rural schools. Forming groups of general educators, special educators, parents, and administrators for the purpose of supporting each other and to ameliorate the challenges found in rural schools is cost effective and flexible. While organizations like ACRES and CEC provide educators a look at the "outside" world, they do not give the daily personal contact that many educators need. This is the story of a small group of dedicated individuals who needed more, wanted more, and worked to gain more.

H.E.R.O.

H.E.R.O. (Highway 20 Educational Resource Organization) began in the fall of 1999. It came about due to the desire of a special education teacher in a small rural community for emotional and professional support. Although there was some activity in the spring of 1999, it wasn't until that fall that a small group of special educators and parents started meeting on a regular basis. The number in attendance has fluctuated between 2 and 11. Sometimes only Pat and I were at the meetings, but we just kept coming back. We knew that if H.E.R.O. was ever to grow and help anyone, people had to be able to count on us. Early in our meetings we decided that the group would meet on the second Saturday of every month at the same time (10:00 AM) and at the same place (a local restaurant). The location was centrally located for those who attended. The farthest that anyone had to drive was approximately 60 miles; the shortest drive was 20 miles.

In the course of the last year and a half many formats have been tried. Not everything we tried worked. Sometimes meetings were preplanned. These meetings generally provided training in some aspect of special education knowledge or procedure. Other meetings were totally spontaneous. At these times members could ask questions or share experiences. Sometimes those attending just needed to connect with others who had experienced similar events and feelings. Currently, the membership of H.E.R.O. is composed of special education teachers, administrators, a school board member, a nurse, a college professor, and parents of children who are receiving special education services.

In order to give a "feeling" of the importance of H.E.R.O. , I asked four people (two men and two women) to share their thoughts. The first is Joe Hershfeldt. He has a small farm in the panhandle of Nebraska. Joe reads with difficulty and dropped out of high school. His son receives special education services in a town 40 miles from his home school. The home school district refused to provide the services Joe's son needed and Joe enrolled his son in a school district that would work with him. This experience helped Joe to become an active member in the Nebraska Advocacy Services. It is common for Joe to drive to Lincoln (approx. 500 miles east) to talk to lawmakers about the issues involved in special education.

Pat Porter teaches in an elementary school. She is the only special education teacher in her school and there is only one elementary school in the district. Pat and the special education teacher in the high school provide all the special education services for the entire district. Because of her feelings of isolation and need for professional development, Pat worked to get H.E.R.O. started in 1999. Elizabeth Dugger is the Family Resource Coordinator for SPEAKOUT (supporting parents with education and advocacy for kids, outreach understanding training). This group was formed this summer and its mission is to start local support groups like H.E.R.O.. Elizabeth has a son who received special education services while he was in school. Chuck Squier is the new superintendent of a rural school district. Both he and his wife have been special education teachers. He is finding that there are some unique issues in a rural area.

Personal Interviews

1. Why is there a need for a rural support group?

Joe: We need to get people on the same page. We have gone too long without knowing where others are coming from. What is in other's hearts? People have felt really lonely, no one really cared. They were ostracized. When someone is not part of the community, that is someone who is not wanted. When you are ostracized, it makes it very tough for your kids.

Pat: I didn't ever have anyone to turn to, to ask any of the questions I had. I would talk to the other special education teacher, but we often had tried everything and were both up a creek. Regular education teachers don't understand or know how to help you. You need people who have experienced the same problems to give you some advice. It's also important to include parents. They deal at home with the same things we do.

Elizabeth: Parents need support! They often feel like they are isolated, that they are the only ones going through this problem. This group brings parents together at the same table at the same time. It compiles resources, about who has what to offer and get it out to parents. A lot of times the parents don't know what is available for help with their children. A group like H.E.R.O. helps to decrease the stigma around behavioral and emotional disorders.

Chuck: There's no doubt that we need to continue to raise the consciousness of folks about the needs of kids with special needs. It is more important in the panhandle than it is in eastern Nebraska where every school has a special education director and a huge special education staff. Here we have two special education teachers and it is lucky if they can get together once a month and visit let alone get any direction. Ninety percent of administrators don't have any special education background and don't really understand. Many of the ones who have been around for a long time really don't understand why we have to do what we have to do because of federal laws. A group that can feed information, that can share information, is very much needed.

2. How have you benefited from a rural support group?

Joe: Parents and special education teachers need to sit down together at the same table and talk. When my kid had problems, I knew that they weren't just because of my kid. The majority of parents' problems that they have with their kids in school are because they are not dealt with, they are pushed aside. This group lets us talk and take care of problems.

Pat: I just feel so much better. If nothing else, even if I don't get anything tangible; when we all get together and discuss and find that someone else is having the same thoughts I am, or has had the same thing happen, has the same problem - sometimes they have some good ideas - and it makes me feel wonderful to be able to even unload myself and say what I have been feeling. Sometimes you just feel like you can't talk to anyone else because they don't understand. Your principal doesn't understand where you are coming from; the classroom teachers don't, your superintendent doesn't always understand (unless he's a special education man). Only another special education teacher or parent can understand. That's what makes me feel great when parents show up. It makes you feel good because you have some new ideas.

Elizabeth: I have a child with a disability. I was feeling very isolated, wondering if it was my fault, wondering why I was still sticking it out. I was invited to a conference and I walked into this group and they were all talking the same language I was talking; the same despair, discouragement, and on the other hand the same hope. It just felt wonderful.

Chuck: As an administrator, I want to stay in touch with my teachers and my parents. I want us to do the right thing. It doesn't do any good to fight and argue. Instead it is important to talk over our problems.

3. What would you like to see this support group accomplish?

Joe: This helps our kids have an opportunity. We don't want our kid to be looked at different from other kids. We want them to have an opportunity. We want the school system to know that there is a group out there that will go into the IEP with you and that the school system will treat you no better, but no worse, than in the big cities.

Pat: I hope that eventually we could grow so that we can divide into different groups; parent groups, teacher groups, para groups. We need to make the public in our area more aware of special education problems. We need to show people that they don't need to be so afraid of special education kids. I would like us to give workshops and maybe become the "big red rooster" of this part of the country. We are so isolated. It takes so long to drive from town to town. It would be so good if we could have some good workshops up here because all the good workshops are always in Lincoln or Denver or somewhere else. Most of us can't afford to go to these and our districts can't afford to send us, so we don't go. I want us to be as educated as the people in the eastern part of the state, as educated as you can get. The Internet is not the same thing as being there and meeting these people. Meeting the parents and feeling their emotions. People who think that the Internet can do all things need to be enlightened; they need to learn more.

Elizabeth: I don't want any parent to drive more than 40 or 50 miles to attend a group. I want them to gain the knowledge of what services are available in each county. We need to compile that and get it out to parents who need the help. I want to maintain a "warm line". A 24-hour number were parents can get help, were we can help them connect with others.

Chuck: I'd like to see this be a clearinghouse for information. To provide an opportunity to disseminate information to a lot of people who really don't have access to special education laws, special education requirements, special education state directives. I'd like to see the kids in the panhandle given some of the same opportunities that other kids around the state are given.

Hints for starting a support group

Jody Swarbrick (2001) has some good suggestions concerning starting a support group. She believes that "support is essential for families and children with special needs" and encourages people to start their own support group. She gives 11 steps in starting a group.

1. Identify the area of needs or support for special children and their families.
2. Contact area disability chapters for information and/or referrals.
3. Begin recruiting families by:
4. Advertising your support group in local shopping newspapers.
5. Contacting your local news and radio stations.
6. Putting up flyers on bulletin boards in public places, such as, grocery stores.
7. Leaving flyers at your local schools, public library, doctor's offices, and hospitals.
8. Locate a meeting place, then begin with an informational meeting.
9. Define your goals and objectives.
10. Decide if your meetings will include parents only or families.
11. As a group, designate committees to plan events.

When we started H.E.R.O. we used all 11 steps, even though we hadn't yet read Ms. Swarbrick's article. In the article she states that the time required to start a support group varies but will take about one month. Based upon our personal experience, we would disagree with such a short time period. I suggest that you give yourself one to two years to get a support group up and running.

Conclusion

For many rural educators, a sense of quiet desperation pervades their attempts to have the support and ongoing information needed for their professional and emotional needs. The need for personal contact and interaction takes on even greater importance for special education personnel. A support group is a great way to meet the needs of parents, teachers, and administrators. Starting a support group in a rural area requires patience and a strong belief in the need for and benefits of a gathering of the people most involved in special education. H.E.R.O. is still young and many things can and probably will go wrong. However, we are all learning together and have found that our problems are what bind us together.

References

Coeyman, M. (1999, January 5). Getting kids to stay. Christian Science Monitor, p 13.

Helge, D. (1992). Solving special education reform, problems in rural education. Preventing School Failure. 36, (4). 11-16.

Marrs, L. (1984). A bandwagon without music: Preparing rural special educators. Exceptional Children, 50 334-342.

Morrissette, P.J. (2000). The experiences of the rural school counselor. Professional School Counseling, 3, (3). 197-208.

Swarbrick, J. (February, 2001). How to start a support group [3 paragraphs]. About.com: The Human Internet. [On-line]. Available: http://specialchildren.about.com/parenting/specialchildren/library/howto/htsupport.htm?iam=dp&terms=parent+support+groups+for+special+education

Suzanne Ripley
NICHCY
1825 Connecticut Ave NW
Washington DC 20009

Mario Payne
HEATH
One Dupont Circle
Suite 800
Washington DC 20036

RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS, ADMINISTRATORS AND FAMILIES

Clearinghouses are available to provide information and technical assistance to all who might benefit from their resources. Two such disability clearinghouses are NICHCY, the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities and HEATH Resource Center , the National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities. Between the two information centers, they provide information pertinent to the needs and interests of children from birth through adulthood, both with a focus on education and training. These two clearinghouses can provide an introduction to a wide array of specialized organizations and agencies.

For families, educators, administrators, students, and pre-service university programs links with these clearinghouse provides immediate access to publications, databases of specialized centers in every state and territory, and access to information specialists who can assist with individual questions. Web sites offer a wide variety of materials, in English and Spanish, and link to hundreds of additional resources.

This session discussed in detail the mission, products, services of these two centers. Early Intervention, special education, post secondary education, and training are the primary topics discussed.

Other referral resources are also discussed along with detailed information on how to identify and locate them through the clearinghouses. The discussion also covered application of the information provided to addressing individual needs and working with local entities for implementation.

The rural focus is the delivery system for these clearinghouses. Both offer all services and products electronically. Both are accessible by toll free phone and tty as well as traditional mail. Because of the ease of access, information is made readily available to people living in rural and remote areas. Because products are available in full text on line there is no waiting for delivery. Because both are national in scope, all states and territories are covered in the referral resources.

Check out the Web sites for details:
www.nichcy.org
www.heath-resource-center.org

Michael E. Sullivan, Ed.D.
Professor
Marshall University Graduate College
Special Education & Leadership Studies
100 Angus E. Peyton Drive
So. Charleston, WV 25303

TEAMING UP FOR LOW INCIDENCE TRAINING
A COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL PREPARATION PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS OF THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

History and Rationale

As recently as 1998, no public or private college or university in West Virginia offered an educational licensure program for preparing teachers of the blind and visually impaired. Historically, Vanderbilt University and the University of Alabama provided this program in West Virginia. The program offered by Vanderbilt University proved to be too expensive, and the University of Alabama withdrew its program in West Virginia. The goal of the program described was to provide a joint West Virginia University-Marshall University program, with support from the West Virginia Department of Education and the West Virginia Board of Trustees, that would be available instate.

Students with visual impairments have specific needs that result from low vision or blindness. Since 80 to 90 percent of learning typically occurs through the visual sense, an impairment of this primary sensory channel necessitates the use of unique and specialized instructional techniques to assure that learning is optimized. Students with visual impairments need direct, multisensory experiences to compensate for incidental learning. Also, students with visual impairments must be taught not only the areas in the standard core curriculum, but also skills in the "expanded" core curriculum. This includes skills such as braille reading and writing, abacus, interpreting tactual graphics, keyboarding, adaptive technology, use of low vision devices, concept development, interpersonal/social orientation and mobility, and independent living.

To assure maximum progress in learning, students with visual impairments need teachers who are specifically prepared to address their unique needs. Teachers of students with visual impairments must have expertise in providing specialized assessments, in teaching the areas of the expanded core curriculum, and in collaborating with other educators in supporting the students in the general education classroom. In addition, federal and state regulations included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Senate Bill 300, Senate Bill 409, and West Virginia State Board of Education Policy 2419 support the responsibility of public agencies to provide training opportunities for these individuals.

Need

Nationally, 1 student in every 1,000 school-age students has a visual impairment that results in an educational need. Since West Virginia has a school-age student population of around 300,000, there should be about 300 students who require the assistance of a teacher of students with visual impairment to assure maximum progress in school. At the outset of this program, there were 138 students identified with visual impairments as their primary disability. However, the Information Resource Center at the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind reported serving 453 students with significant visual impairments in the state. These students need specialized instruction and related services, yet they may not have been identified as visually impaired and on the caseload of a certified teacher of the visually impaired. There may be multiple reasons for this situation:

- Students may not have been identified because teachers of students with visual impairments were not available to conduct the specialized assessments needed to document their disability-specific needs;
- School administrators and educational teams may have been reluctant to identify students as visually impaired if qualified personnel were not available to meet their needs;

- Students may have other disabilities, one of which may be a visual impairment, but are not identified for either of the reasons mentioned above.

A key to assuring that the needs of students with visual impairments are addressed would be to have teachers of students with visual impairments readily available to provide specialized assessments and, if found to have specific educational needs due to a visual impairment, to provide specialized direct and consultative services to address those needs.

The lack of fully qualified teachers in West Virginia to provide specialized services for students with visual impairments was judged to be a critical issue. According to research related to best practice in this area, there should be a ratio of one teacher for every 10 students with visual impairments. Based on this information, there should have been 30 specialists available in West Virginia to meet the needs of an expected 300 students. There were only 26 certified teachers of the visually impaired at project outset. However, due to the rural nature of West Virginia, students with visual impairments requiring specialized instruction are often identified in counties with no certified teachers.

Target Audience for Initial Cohort

The primary target audiences for which the program was designed included:

- Teachers of Visual Impairment working on emergency permit
- Special Education teachers seeking endorsement in Visual Impairment
- General education teachers seeking endorsement in Visual Impairment
- Others who serve the visually impaired population within their professions.

Program Description and Governing Board

The new teacher certification program in Visual Impairment has been in operation since Fall, 1999. This master's level program is offered to individuals who hold teacher certification and is financially supported by Marshall University, West Virginia University, the Board of Trustees, and the West Virginia Department of Education. The James H. and Alice Teubert Charitable Trust Foundation provided additional funding for materials and equipment in the 1999-2000 operating year. The West Virginia Schools for the Blind offers both technical assistance and practicum placements for students. The program is housed and administered from the Graduate School of Education and Professional Development at the Marshall University Graduate College in South Charleston, West Virginia.

A program advisory board was established and met for the first time in November 1999. The advisory board is comprised of members from Marshall University Graduate College, West Virginia University, West Virginia Department of Education, the Teubert Foundation, vision educators/administrators, eye care professionals, blind consumers, and parents. Many of the members were participants of the original coordinating committee that established the Program in Visual Impairment in West Virginia. The support of the advisory board helps assure that the program will continue to enhance the best interests of the community and individuals with visual impairment or blindness.

Program Outline

CIVI 500	Introduction to Visual Impairment (definitions, incidence, prevalence, psychosocial aspects, development, educational programs/service delivery, professionalism) (3 hours)
CIVI 501	Braille Reading and Writing (literacy braille code, writing with braille and slate and stylus, proofreading, interlining, basic Nemeth code, basic textbook formatting, overview of other codes) (3 hours)
CIVI 502	Structures and Functions of the Human Visual System (anatomy and physiology of the eye, development of the visual system, clinical evaluation, functional evaluation, environmental modification, optical and nonoptical low vision devices) (3 hours)

CIVI 503	Instructional Strategies for Teaching Students with Visual Impairments (adapting instruction for visually impaired students, formal and informal assessment, early childhood intervention, and parent involvement) (3 hours)
CIVI 504	Instructional Strategies for Teaching Students with Multiple Impairments (interaction of sensory disability with other disabilities, functional curriculum, alternative communication systems, alternative mobility systems, collaboration with other educators and specialists) (3 hours)
CIVI 505	Basic Orientation and Mobility Skills (basic concept development, movement, orientation to the environment, pre-cane mobility skills, collaborating with O & M specialists) (3 hours)
CIVI 506*	Practicum in Visual Impairment (a variety of service delivery models, including itinerant and residential settings, provided with students from infancy to early adulthood) (6 semester hours)

*Practicum experiences include both itinerant and residential models of service delivery. In the public schools, student teachers are mentored by an experienced teacher of the visually impaired and supervised by the Project Director. All students also attend a one week summer session at West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind where they participate in intensive, specialized instructional experiences, routines of daily living, and orientation and mobility lessons. Students will again be mentored by an experienced teacher of the visually impaired and supervised by the Project Director.

Extent and Variety of Services

In the 1999-2000 academic year, a student cohort of 25 core students completed four courses (12 credit hours). This represents half of the total program requirements. Students represent 18 counties in West Virginia and all eight RESAs. The professional backgrounds of the students include early childhood education, elementary education, and special education. One individual is a supervisor in special education. Courses have been completed in Introduction to Visual Impairment, Structure and Function of the Human Eye, Braille Reading and Writing, and Summer Practicum.

The coordinator of the Program in Visual Impairment has primary responsibility for course instruction, for supervision of students, and management of administrative duties. She also serves as a liaison to community organizations and provides technical support to educators and families in West Virginia.

Anticipated Outcomes

The certification program will directly improve the education and training of school age students who are blind or visually impaired. By providing the state with a larger pool of certified professionals, it is believed that more students with visual impairment will be appropriately identified and will receive the specialized instruction they require.

The current program in Visual Impairment will meet the need for certified teachers by providing the appropriate coursework to meet AER (Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired) and state standards (list of the courses provided earlier). AER's Standards for University Personnel Programs in Education of Students with Visual Impairments was used to design all the competencies developed in the MU/WVU program. The Program in Visual Impairment also offers continuing education opportunities for certified teachers who seek inservice opportunities. Courses are offered using a combination of face to face instruction and WebCT so that access to a course is not limited by student proximity to a university campus. Meeting sites for classes are provided at a centralized location in the state and are also rotated to a variety of geographic locations within the state.

Program Evaluation

Students evaluate all graduate courses at the end of each semester. Course evaluations are shared with faculty after the course is completed and grades are submitted to the Registrar. Additionally, according to Board of Trustees policy, each university program undergoes a rigorous assessment every five years. Programs must provide evidence that they are viable, adequate and necessary or they are terminated. Quality is also assured because both Marshall University and West Virginia University undergo accreditation visits from our regional accreditation body every 10 years and both institutions have been fully accredited since 1928. The coordinator of the Program in Visual Impairment submitted an end of year report to Teubert detailing utilization of funds for 1999-2000 and will likewise provide an accounting of the expenditures if a similar grant is awarded for the 2000-2001 cycle.

The number of teachers who complete the certification program and subsequently serve students with visual impairment or blindness in West Virginia will also measure success of the program. By the end of 2001 it is anticipated that at least 25 more teachers will be available to serve the educational needs of children who require specialized instruction from a teacher of the visually impaired. Demand for the program has resulted in the formation of a second cohort of students.

Personnel

Christine Roman, Ph.D, coordinates the Program in Visual Impairment. Individuals who provided instruction as part time faculty include: Dr. Terry Schwartz from the WVU Eye Center, Judy Hurst, an experienced teacher of children with visual impairment, and Darren Burton from the University Affiliated Center for Developmental Disabilities.

AUTHOR INDEX

Adkins, Carol
Northern Arizona University 221

Al-Juraid, Sarah
Southeastern Louisiana University 82

Alexander, Melina
Utah State University 55, 218, 229, 243

Alvarado, Jose Luis
San Diego State University 159

Babione, Carolyn
Indiana University Southeast 171

Baker, Cheryl
Old Dominion University 225

Baldus, Clar
The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development 106

Begay, Mary Helen
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Belcher, Rebecca Newcom
Lincoln University 203

Blum, H. Timothy
University of Wyoming 46, 60, 77

Bradley, Brian
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Bradley-Wilkinson, Evangeline
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Burris, Mina
Northern Arizona University 118

Burton, James
West Virginia University 73, 177

Butera, Gretchen
West Virginia University 73

Cantrell, Geneal
Furman University 30

Carney, Karen
Arizona State University 36

Cegelka, Patricia Thomas
San Diego State University 159

Cepello, Michelle
California State University—Chico 185

Churchill, Lisa
California State University—Chico 185

Collins, Belva
University of Kentucky 233

Cook, Robert
Center for Persons with Disabilities 258

Craig, Gail Peterson
University of Wisconsin—Superior 252

Cunningham, Michael
Willamette Education Service District 273

Davey, Bryan
Utah State University 55, 218, 229, 243

Dillon, Rebecca
Stephen F Austin State University 155

Duff, Michael
Discover Video Production 256

Edmonson, Claudia
Utah State University 55

Enright, Betsy
LEARNS: Center for Community Inclusion 27

Fishbaugh, Mary Susan
Montana State University—Billings 3

Firch, Suzy
San Diego State University 159

Flood, Pamela
LEARNS: Center for Community Inclusion 27

Friedland, Billie
Eastern Illinois University 196

Gable, Robert
Old Dominion University 225

Gaddis, Lena
Northern Arizona University 118, 124

Gamble, Armanda
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Garza, Elizabeth
Northern Arizona University 118

Gilberts, Guy
Chadron State College 64, 277

Gilberts, Marilyn
Nebraska District #30 135

Grisham-Brown, Jennifer
University of Kentucky 233

Hager, Jane
Old Dominion University 225

Hagie, Chris
San Jose State University 241

Harriman, Nancy
Denmark Elementary School 88

Harrison, Suzanne
Redmond School District 150

Heimbecker, Connie
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Hess, Robert
Arizona State University West 5

Honanie, Jeannette
Northern Arizona University 124

Hungerford, Ryan
Furman University 30

Jensen, Mary
California State University—Chico 185

Jephson, Melanie
Stephen F Austin State University 155

Keasler, Debbie
Southwestern Oklahoma State University 250

Keyes, Megan
Hunt Meadows Elementary School 30

Lamorey, Suzanne
Arizona State University 21

Ledezma, Julie
Northern Arizona University 118

Lemke, June Canty
Gonzaga University 150

Lewis, Joan
  University of Nebraska at Kearney ... 109, 114

Lignugaris-Kraft, Benjamin
  Utah State University ... 212, 229

Lipsett, Laura
  University of Wyoming ... 77

Ludlow, Barbara
  West Virginia University ... 256

Luna, Gaye
  Northern Arizona University ... 93

Madsen, Kim
  Chadron State College ... 100

Martin, Suzanne
  University of Central Florida ... 5, 82, 208

Mayhew, John
  University of Utah ... 181

McCarty, Nellie
  Northern Arizona University ... 50, 128, 266

McMullen, Lynn
  West Virginia University ... 177

Medina, Catherine
  Northern Arizona University ... 50, 93, 128, 266

Melville, Gayle
  Southeastern Louisiana University ... 208

Menlove, Ronda
  Utah State University ... 37, 212, 243

Miller, James
  University of New Orleans ... 208

Miller, Kevin
  University of Central Florida ... 148

Milner, Carole
  Minnesota State University ... 236

Mitchem, Katherine
  West Virginia University ... 190

Montemurro, Theodore
  San Jose State University ... 241

Nelson, Bernita
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Nelson, Jacob
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Neyme, Sharon
Utah State Office of Education 37

Nolan, Joe
Southwestern Oklahoma State University 250

Pae, Holly
University of South Carolina Spartanburg 12

Palma, Gloria
North Carolina A&T State University 230

Payne, Mario
HEATH 281

Perry, Nancy
Arizona State University 21

Peterson, Patricia
Northern Arizona University 118, 124

Pettigrew, Bobbie
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Prater, Greg
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Redsteer, Denise
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Reyes-Blanes, Maria
University of Central Florida 142

Richards, Ann
West Virginia University 190

Ripley, Suzanne
NICHCY 281

Robbins, Cynthia
Northern Arizona University 124

Rogers, Myra
Southeastern Louisiana University 208

Rork, Colin
Hunt Meadows Elementary School 30

Rude, Harvey
University of Northern Colorado 166

Rule, Sarah
Center for Persons with Disabilities 258

Schuster, John
University of Kentucky 233

Sealander, Karen
Northern Arizona University 50, 118, 124, 128, 266

Sebastian, Joan
University of Utah 181

Shea, Catherine
Indiana University Southeast 171

Slocum, Timothy
Utah State University 218

Smalley, Shelia
University of Central Florida 142

Smith, Jody
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Snyder, Maria
Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Stalnaker, Helen
Tuba City Public Schools 124

Steinmiller, Georgine
Henderson State University 43, 69

Steinmiller, Bob
Henderson State University 43, 69

Stenhoff, Donald
Utah State University 55, 218, 229, 243

Strasburger, Richard
West Virginia University 265

Street, Steven
University of North Dakota 166

Sullivan, Michael
Marshall University Graduate College 282

Tonelson, Stephen
Old Dominion University 225

Torrey, Carol
Southeastern Louisiana University 82

Tso, Tonya
    Northern Arizona University 124

Ullery, Guadalupe
    Northern Arizona University 118

Vogel, Michelle
    Hunt Meadows Elementary School 30

Wallis, Terry
    Vanderbilt University 69

Walz, Lynn
    Eastern Illinois University 196

Wells, Deborah
    Monongalia County Schools 190

West, Richard
    Utah State University 55

White, Sherri
    Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Whitehair, Marsha
    Northern Arizona University 50, 128, 266

Wienke, Wilfred
    University of Central Florida 148

Williams, Jane
    Arizona State University West 5

Yeager, Noranne
    Chadron State College 100

Yocom, Dorothy Jean
    University of Wyoming 46, 60, 77

Zlotolow, Steve
    San Jose State University 241